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HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF ACTON



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Acton Common at the time of the completion of the library

HISTORY

OF THE

TOWN OF ACTON,

Mass.



By

HAROLD R. PHALEN

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Printed in United States of America
Limited Edition

Middlesex Printing, Inc.
Cambridge, Mass.

Bookplate - $7.50
$1.16-'16 ed

1253512

To

WEBSTER SANDERSON BLANCHARD

1894 - 1953

Native son of Acton - life long friend
outstanding citizen and gentleman,
whose interest and advice were a constant inspiration,
this volume is dedicated.

FOREWORD

The compilation of this work was greatly facilitated by the fact that the minutes of every Acton town meeting, both annual and special, together with the acts of the selectmen, are extant and legible. For a short period just previous to the incorporation of the town, when, as Concord Village, it held its own meetings and elected its own clerk, the data is by its very nature less fulsome.

The secondary sources consist largely of the following six books:

1. *History of Concord* by Lemuel Shattuck (1835),
2. *Acton in History*, a sixty page excerpt by Rev. James Fletcher and and others, from a composite history of the Middlesex County, (1890),
3. *Historical Papers*, vol. 2, a volume of historical papers with unnumbered pages, in the Acton Memorial Library.
4. A volume in the Acton Memorial Library catalogued as a scrap book.
5. *Memorial to Luther Blanchard*, by Alfred S. Hudson, (1899),
6. *Battle of April* 19, 1775, by Charles L. Coburn, (1921).

Other sources consisted of the printed town reports; heirlooms in the form of family scrapbooks; files of the Boston newspapers, the Acton Patriot, verbatim personal recollections, and a few magazine articles which are clearly identified in the proper context.

PREFACE

The writing of the history of a small New England town is perforce a labor of love. The scope is too restricted and the possible circulation too meagre to engender any visions of pecuniary reward. Remuneration must come in the form of personal satisfaction that the tale has been told, so far as the talents of the author permit, coupled with the hope that there will be those who find it instructive and pleasing because in some manner it impinges upon their lives.

It would appear upon superficial consideration that a lack of facts would be an ever persistent annoyance in the case of a minor rural community. Acton is an amazing exception. The difficulty at all stages has been a plethora of facts. Thanks for this situation are due the town clerks of the past who through the years have been unusually assiduous in the completeness and the preservation of the details. Acton records never have been burned, carelessly thrown away, or maliciously destroyed, as has been the case in diverse sections of the country.

As the data was assembled it became apparent that any fulsome treatment of the material was impossible within the compass of a single volume of comfortable size. Furthermore the modern reader is not intrigued at the prospect of an encyclopedic discussion of everything and everybody. The author perforce had to decide whether to be biographer or historian. Whereas the historian reaches wide to embrace all the facts he can, the biographer focuses his attention upon an individual and his intimates. The historian, as a rule, is chiefly interested in recreating the past in terms that explain the present. To the historian individuals are significant primarily for what they reveal of larger trends and how they bespeak the mores of their day and time. The writer chose the latter course.

The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance that has come to him from numerous friends who have been helpful with their time, their ideas, and in many cases the loan of irreplaceable family records and priceless documents.

Among these should be cited a small coterie, all now deceased, most of whom never expected to have their names associated with a written history of the town but who, all unconsciously, had a tremendous impact upon the avid interest of the author as he chatted often with them during his earlier years. The group ran the whole gamut of education and philosophic outlook but the members had certain important things in common, namely, an amazing familiarity with Actonaria — not all of it printable in a dignified resume — a stout loyalty to the town and a competence as raconteurs. In addition to the author's parents the list includes his grandmother, Lucetta Avery Reed, whose countless hours of reminiscing with Mr. Moses

Taylor went on for years in the evening of their lives as he stopped by on his daily trek to the village store of his son; Rev. Frederick Brooks Noyes, who grew up in the shadow of the monument; Asaph Parlin, whose ancestors helped build the first meeting house; Luther Forbush, the past master of the tall tale and the shady anecdote; Reuben Law Reed, the living repository of Revolutionaria; and the inimitable Nelson Tenny.

Without the more than one hundred and forty persons with whom the author carried on correspondence in varying degree the project could not have been successful. To them sincere albeit inadequate appreciation is hereby rendered.

In particular, for certain specific data, indebtedness is acknowledged to Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Allen; G. C. Bartlett, Assistant Town Clerk, Newport, Vt; Mr. and Mrs. Howard Billings; Mr. and Mrs. Webster Blanchard; Mr. and Mrs. Prentice Blood; Mrs. Robert Bond; C. P. Burrill, Boston; Alderman L. C. Caffrey, Wembley, Middlesex, England; Augustine B. Conant; Grace Patten Conant, Littleton; Mrs. C. Elizabeth Cook; Lowell H. Cram; Arthur F. Davis, Librarian Emeritus, Acton; Dr. Wendell F. Davis; Mrs. Margaret Thatcher Drury, Librarian, Littleton; Herbert Ganter, Archivist, College of William and Mary; John S. Hoar; Eleanor Jones, Town Clerk, Maynard; Elmer Joslin, Superintendent of Highways, Concord; Frederick S. Kennedy, Cemetery Superintendant, Acton; Mrs. Carrie Kimball; David Kinsley; Rev. William A. Knight, Framingham; Evelyn A. Knowlton; Mary H. Lothrop, Librarian, Acton; Mrs. Bertha Lowden; Theron A. Lowden; John Littlefield; Julia McCarthy; Florence A. Merriam; H. Stuart McGregor, Chief of Fire Department, Acton; Virginia Milberry; F. A. Persons, Greenfield; Edith C. Pitman, Colorado Springs; V. Elsie Phalen, Wallaston; Gladys V. Pratt, Librarian, Framingham State College; W. Arthur Rayner; Mrs. Marion Reed, Ralph Richardson, Ayer; Chester B. Robbins; Fred L. Robbins, Albany, Georgia; Clara Sawyer; Eleanor L. Smith, Librarian, Stow; Florence Smith, Town Clerk, Boxborough; Mrs. Charles E. Smith; Mrs. Andrew Torsleff; Horace F. Tuttle; Mrs. Bertha White; Professor Leonard D. White, University of Chicago; Waldo E. Whitcomb; Mr. and Mrs. Oliver D. Wood. Mention must also be made of the generous cooperation of the officials of the Dewey and Almy Chemical Company, the Sir Steak Machinery Company, the Air Production Corporation, and the Rex Corporation.

Very material assistance was rendered by the research department of the Boston Public Library, the Office of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts, and the Offices of the Secretaries of State of Massachusetts and Louisiana.

The photographic work entailed in the difficult reproduction of the several valuable documents and pictures was handled most adeptly

by Mr. James Mays and Mr. Thomas Williams of the Colonial Williamsburg Corporation and Mr. Charles Hanson of Concord, photographer for the Arthur D. Little Company of Cambridge. Chief of Police Micheal Foley, whose hobby has been the means of embellishing the covers of the recent Acton town reports, was most accomodating in connection with certain of the exterior scenes.

One happy circumstance was the gracious willingness of Professors Lyman H. Butterfield and Douglass G. Adair, who function jointly in the department of History of the College of William and Mary and on the editorial staff of the Institute of early American History and Culture in Williamsburg, to advise respecting text, publisher, and format.

The sponsors and the author respectfully submit this volume to the citizens and friends of Acton as the fulfillment of a public service.

Williamsburg, Va.
September 15, 1953

HAROLD R. PHALEN

HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF ACTON

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Part I

Settlement to Incorporation

This is the story of Acton for three hundred years. As such it is a record of change at a constantly accelerated pace. Within one lifetime things have happened at an amazing rate to the type of society embraced in the term "Old New England". The last of the strain of folk known as "Yankees" are passing into the burying grounds where their dust mingles with that of those who fought at Bunker Hill, on the Plains of Abraham, and with the braves of King Philip. Many of the family names that were once synonymous with integrity, initiative, and civic responsibility and were predominant on church records and voting lists have been thrust by the inexorable glacier of time into the limbo of forgotten things. The acres which once they tilled are peopled by those not only strangers to the locality but in many instances to the country and the language as well.

The rapidly changing scene serves but to throw into more prominent relief the rural New Englander of a former era. He was a product of a set of circumstances that induced a culture, that defined a mores, which, quite apart from the question of merit, was unique, interesting, and worthy of record. Even though the charges of provincialism and eccentricity be proved there remains withal a charm that ceaselessly tugs at the heart strings of the native of the section.

The wanderer may seek and attain success in the uttermost parts of the earth. He may marry, rear a family and even lay away dear ones in that distant spot. Nevertheless there will come at times in tumultuous procession visions of arching elms over shady streets flanked by well clipped lawns, of painted cottages with cool green shutters, of meticulously stacked wood piles, and white church spires rising aloft to catch the last brightness of the sunset glow. Anon the picture may change to a stone walled pasture at dawn where juniper and barberry and sweet fern sprawl athwart a stony hillside spotted with night webs; or it may show a dusty highway, slightly travelled, where the braver weeds grow in two narrow ribbons and on either side thrive raspberries, wild grapes, and goldenrod or possibly pitcher plant, cranberries and sweet flag.

For some this vision will arouse memories of former years. For them these pages are written. Possibly the casual stranger will now and then be intrigued as well. The town has played a worthy role in the saga of the nation. Its story deserves to be told in full by a sympathetic pen.

The township of Acton, County of Middlesex, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, is located approximately twenty five miles northwest of Boston. It is an eleven sided polygon having a maximum width of

four miles and a total span of six and six tenths miles in maximum length. The area is eighty five acres in excess of thirteen thousand or about twenty and a third square miles.

This tract of land, although never within the original boundaries of Concord, was for some seventy years an adjunct thereto as a land grant and was locally designated as the New Grant or as Concord Village. In consequence the early history of Acton is inextricably involved with that of the elder community and any study of Acton must induce an investigation of Concord conditions and the personalities instrumental in effectuating the land grants and the subsequent incorporation of the town as an independent unit.

Concord was incorporated in 1635 at which time the General Court ordered that there should be a "plantacon att Musketequid & that there shall be 6 myles of land square to belong to it". The original grant was laid out in what was supposed to be a square. No other grants had been made in that general area and consequently it was not deemed necessary to notify any adjoining owner of the running of the lines. Therefore the simplest possible form was adopted.

The beginning corner was identical with the present Concord, Sudbury, Maynard, Acton corner which lies just a few rods south of the dam in the Assabet River for many years known as the Powder Mill dam inasmuch as the American Powder Company utilized the water privilige for the manufacture of explosives. A third class country road leads directly southward from the dam, rises along a gentle incline and shortly forms a Y. The corner stone, of split granite and in excellent preservation, stands just a few yards along the left branch of the Y. It is well covered with painted dates indicating that acording to New England custom the representatives of the respective towns have met there to witness that the monument is visible and in proper position.

Nothing remains today to justify the choice of this spot as a starting point. There is no conspicious feature in the topography, no ledge outcrop, no glacial boulder of importance, not even the junction of two insignificant streams.

Be that as may, here the early surveyors started and measured to the best of their ability a line six miles long which was to serve as the northwestern boundary of Concord and, a century later, as the southeastern boundary of Acton. Subsequent measurements show the distance to be six miles plus a hundred and forty two rods. In fact all four sides of the Concord grant were about two thirds of a mile in excess. Too much attention must not be paid to this discrepancy since such instances were not uncomon during the period when land was readily available. It was a practice of surveyors to throw in extra territory for good measure as compensation for portions that were swampy or barren.

Within the area defined and round about it there dwelt several hundred Indians.[1] These had to be paid not only for the land itself but there also had to be reimbursement for the rights to the shad, salmon, alewives and beaver that abounded in the streams. Accordingly in 1636, at the house of Rev. Mr. Bulkeley, a treaty was made with the Indians and signed by Squaw Sachem, Tohuttawun Sagamore, Muttunkatucka and others whereby the so-called six mile square was ceded to the English "undertakers".

The details of the tribulations of the infant settlement are not pertinent to the history of Acton. Suffice it to record that they were numerous and severe. Nevertheless the spirit of the frontier could not be throttled and hence we find that in 1639 when Thomas Wheeler and others came to Concord they found the most convenient and productive land already taken. It is difficult for the reader who is acquainted with the fertility and extent of the modern Concord truck farms to understand the need for additional acreage for the sparse population of that early day. The concept of intensive agriculture had not then developed and in consequence Wheeler and his companions, observing that to the northwest lay many acres of open meadow with abundant grass, petitioned the General Court in 1642 for a grant of land.

Apparently this petition was not acted upon favorably until about 1650 at which time a grant was made with the proviso that the petitioners immediately avail themselves of the opportunity.

Due to procrastination or for other reasons not recorded no settlement was made on the grant up to 1654. In the meantime the town of Chelmsford had been laid out and incorporated and the Nashoba Plantation had been alloted to the Indians. This nibbling at the remaining free territory appears to have disturbed those desirous of expansion to the extent that in 1654 Robert and Elizabeth Blood petitioned for a grant (Mass. Archives, v. 39, p. 858). The General Court ordered that the interested parties make a return to the Court of "what quantitie of land yet remaynes vndisposed of, which they desire", (Mass. Records, ii, 364). The following return was made in May of 1655:

To the Honored Generall Court assembled at Boston.
The returne of the number of acres of land as an addition

[1] Indian relics have been found in diverse parts of Acton. Fletcher mentions arrowheads on Strawberry Hill. Some particularly fine specimens were dug up in the garden of Mr. Frank Fiske and sufficient artifacts of diverse sorts were ploughed up years ago about a thousand feet to the rear of the residence of Mr. Luther Conant to justify the conclusion that an Indian village had once been located there. In South Acton, in a moist place in the woods not far from the old Piper Lane roadway, lies an Indian grinding stone of unusual size. The surface is from one half inch to seven inches above ground. The hollowed bowl is thirty seven and a half inches by thirty one and a half inches and the depth is ten and a half inches. The dimensions are due to the kindness of Miss Florence Merriam.

to the Towne of Concord according to the order of the General Court in 1654.

Whereas the Court was pleased to graunt to our Towne a village some four years since upon condition they should improve it before others, but neglecting theire opportunity, the plantation of Chelmsford having taken a good part of the same, also Nattatawants having a plantation granted to him which takes up a good some also, we whose names are subscribed have taken a survey of the rest remayning, and wee find about seven thousand acres left out, of which Major Willard hath two thousand except a little part of one end of his farme which lyes in the place of parcell of vacant land, that was since given to Shawshine, this tract of land being by the last Court granted to our Town on this condition that at this Court we should acquaint the Court of the quantitye of what we have.

Tho. Brooke Joseph Wheeler George Heaward
Timothy Wheeler George Wheeler John Jones

Apparently the General Court attended to this matter with more than its usual dispatch since the following order (Mass. Records, v. iv, part i p. 237) appears under the date of May 29, 1655:

In ansr to the peticon of the inhabitants of Concord, the Court doth graunt them five thousand acres of land for feeding according to their peticon, provided it hinder not any former graunts.

In order to make clear where the land lay it was necessary to come to an agreement with the Indians and to have a survey and a return made by qualified surveyors, or artists as they were frequently called at the time. Consequently we find on page 160, vol. 1, of the Ancient Records of Concord the following:

An agreement betweene the Ingenes of Mashoba and the Towne of Concord as followeth:

In consideration, for the last grant of land to Concord, by the generall Court for an Inlargement to the Towne; the Towne of Concord doth give to the plantres of Mashoba fiveteen pounds at six a peny which giueth them full sartisfection in Witnes whereof they doe set to there hands, this 20. *of the* 10. *mo.* 1660.

In the psents of
Joseph Wheler
John Shipard
John Jones

the marke  of nssquan: the marke  of marchnt thoms, the marke  of Wabatut. the marke  of gret James natocotos a blind man. the marke  of pompant, the marke  of gomps. John Thomas and John tahatowon.

From the above it appears that five years elapsed between the time the first grant was made by the Court and date of purchase from the Indians. In the meantime of course the settlers were moving in and taking actual possession of the land according to the pattern of the whole history of the negotiations with the aborigines. Before an adequate survey had been made the Court, upon further solicitation by the land hungry settlers, ordered an additional grant of five thousand acres on May 23, 1665 (Mass. Records, vol. iii, p. 387)

> *Seuerall of the inhabitants of Concord pfering a petition for the graunt of some land, in answer whereunto, the Court thinks meete to graunt them fiue thowsand acors in the place mentioned in their pet., pvided it hinder not any former graunts.*

On the 11th of October following the General Court issued an order for the survey but stipulated certain restrictions:

> *In Answer to the petition of Concord for an enlargement of their bounds: This Court doe Grant them a tract of land conteyned in a plott returned to this Court under the hand of Ensigne Noyes by estimation the whole being five thousand acres. Whereof the Court reserveth two thousand acres to be layed out to either Indians or English as this Court shall see meete hereafter to dispose and grant and the remaindr being about three thousand acres this Court doe grant to Concord so as the same doe not abridge any former grant made by this Court and It is ordered that Leiftenant Beers & Leiftenant Noyes lay out the same & make their retune to the next Court of Election.*

In pursuance of this order Richard Beers (of Watertown) and Thomas Noyes (of Sudbury) laid out in 1666 the New Grant or Concord Village as it was called, comprising the present territory of Acton and portions of Carlisle and Littleton, and made their return the following year. It is difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile their report with the two grants of 1655 and 1665 and with the present boundaries of Acton. The intention seems to be clear but a close scrutiny of the details leads to a dilemma which will be discussed subsequently. As a first step it will be necessary to submit in toto the return of the surveyors.

> *At a General Court of Election heald at Boston 15th of May, 1667 Humbly sheweth this Honord Court that we Richard Beers of Watertowne and Thomas Noyes of Sudbury, being appointed to Lay out & measure to the Inhabitants of Concord a Tract or Tracts of Land, next adjoining to their first Grant in order to which (wee the abovesd) did Lay out & measure unto the Inhabitants of Concord*

their second Grant being five thousand Acres of Land granted in the year 1655 *next Adjoining to their first Grant. Beginning at the southwest Angle of their old Bounds extending their sd Southerly Line upon a northwest point four degrees northerly (according to the meridian compass two miles & two hundred & eighty Rods, there making a right Angle on a bare hill, and from thence a line upon a northeast point four degrees easterly, two miles one halfe & fifty Rods, There meeting with Nashoba Plantation Line, Running the Line, of sd plantation to their Angle, one mile one Quarter & sixty Rods, nearest hand upon an Easterly point there making a Right angle, Runing a Line being the Line of the Indian plantation Two miles one quarter and sixty Rods, there being bounded by Chelmsford line and Billerica Line, as is more plainely described by a plott, in which plott is contained nine thousand and eight hundred acres of Land, one thousand and eight hundred being formerly Granted to Major Willard, the other eight thousand being Granted to the Inhabitants of Concord & Layed out the 5th of May,* 66.

Given under our hands

Richard Beers
Thomas Noyes Surveyer

An extensive analysis of the comparision between the Beers and Noyes meets and bounds the modern Geological Survey map of Acton was made by the author and Highway Superintendent Elmer Joslin of Concord, both experienced surveyors. The details are too involved to be anything but boring to a layman but the crux of the matter is that a discrepancy of several thousand acres exists which has no known explanation. A rigid adherence to the Beers and Noyes survey would move the present boundary line between Acton and Boxborough parallel to itself into a position some eight hundred feet eastwardly of Mt. Hope Cemetery. Under such conditions it would have been impossible for Stephen Hosmer in his survey of Concord Village in 1730 to have obtained an area of twelve thousand nine hundred and sixty five acres which is an exceptionally good approximation to the thirteen thousand and eighty five acres given by the Geological Survey.

The point has been made in the foregoing that the land belonging to Simon Willard was excluded from the territory spoken of as Concord Village. There is ample reason to take this position since the Willard tract (also called the Blood tract, since Robert acquired part of it by purchase from the Indians in 1642 and remaining portions through right of his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Simon Willard) was for many years in an anomalous status and had not been definitely

settled as late as 1744. The Bloods described themselves in their deeds as "living neer Concord". The Farms constituted a distinct area outside the confines of Concord but had no separate civil or ecclesiastical government. The occupants paid their rates in Billerica but when the Indian troubles arose they found Concord more convient and paid their rates there. The question of jurisdiction caused embarrassment to such an extent that it was finally decreed by the General Court that towns be required to make an assessment of two shillings per hundred acres for all such lands, "and also to assess all countrye grants of lands called farmes belonging to peculiar persons that lye nearest unto such toune or tounes".

The term "peculiar persons" has an ironical import in this connection quite unintended by the drawers of the edict. Concord constables shortly found this out to their chagrin. Armed with tax warrants and supported by a sufficient posse, for reasons presently obvious, they visited the Farms and were met by Robert Blood and his two sons with abusive language, accompanied by actual personal violence. This incipient warfare continued until eventually Robert Blood was fined ten pounds in two successive years for "contumelious speech and for villifying His Majesty's authority." Nevertheless the Bloods, although thus conducting themselves, besought the town to provide roads and bridges for their easement and convenience and felt very scurvily treated when there was no observable alacrity to do so. In any event the impasse persisted for many years and the records show that as late as 1744, when the selectmen met with representatives from adjacent towns to perambulate the bounds, the Bloods were regularly warned to appear at the time appointed in order to scrutinize the lines between the town and the Farms.

The foregoing discussion concerns Acton due to the fact that when in 1656 a grant of land west of the Concord River was made to the town of Billerica it became necessary to define more exactly Blood's Farms and Concord Village. Major Willard's farm, which he gave as a dowry to his daughter, Elizabeth Blood, by a deed dated February 23, 1658, was laid out to the northwest of Concord and on both sides of the present boundary between Acton and Carlisle. A triangular controversy between Concord, Billerica and Robert Blood, concerning the boundary line between this farm and the town of Billerica, arose in 1683 and was not settled until 1701. The point designated as Berry Corner on the map played an important role in this controversy. A century ago it was marked by a stake and a pile of lichen-covered boulders and according to Walcott was pointed out to him by Major B. F. Heald who asserted that he had often heard his father and other ancient men refer to it as the old Concord corner.[1]

[1] *Concord in the Colonial Period*, Charles H. Walcott, p. 8.

In any event, whatever the discrepancies in the boundaries of the land grants, there was no lack in the spirit and will of the yeomanry who were demanding additional territory. By 1656 settlement had begun with the arrival of the Shepard and Laws families along with Thomas Wheeler. The fertile meadows soon became attractive, particularly for pasturage, and in consequence the Concord town meeting of January 27, 1668 voted to

> *ley for a ffree Comon; to the psent householdres of Concord; and such as shall hereafter, be approved and allowed; except such psell or psells of it as shall be thought met to make farms for the use and benefit of the Towne.*

At the same meeting it was further stipulated that

> *all men that have not Comon of there own for there Cattle according to the Towne order shall pay 6d a best to those that have a Comon to lett to them in their querter, and if there be not Comon to let them; they then put there Cattle elcewhere.*

On January 12, 1669, a lease was made by Concord to Capt. Thomas Wheeler for two hundred acres of upland and sixty acres of meadow, lying west of Nashoba Brook, in consideration of which he was to pay yearly rental of five pounds after the expiration of the first seven years, and to build a house forty feet in length, eighteen feet wide, and twelve feet stud, "covered with shingles, with a payer of chimnes", also a barn forty feet long, twenty four feet wide, and twelve feet stud. These buidings were to be left at the end of the term for the use of the town, with thirty acres of land in tillage and sufficiently fenced.

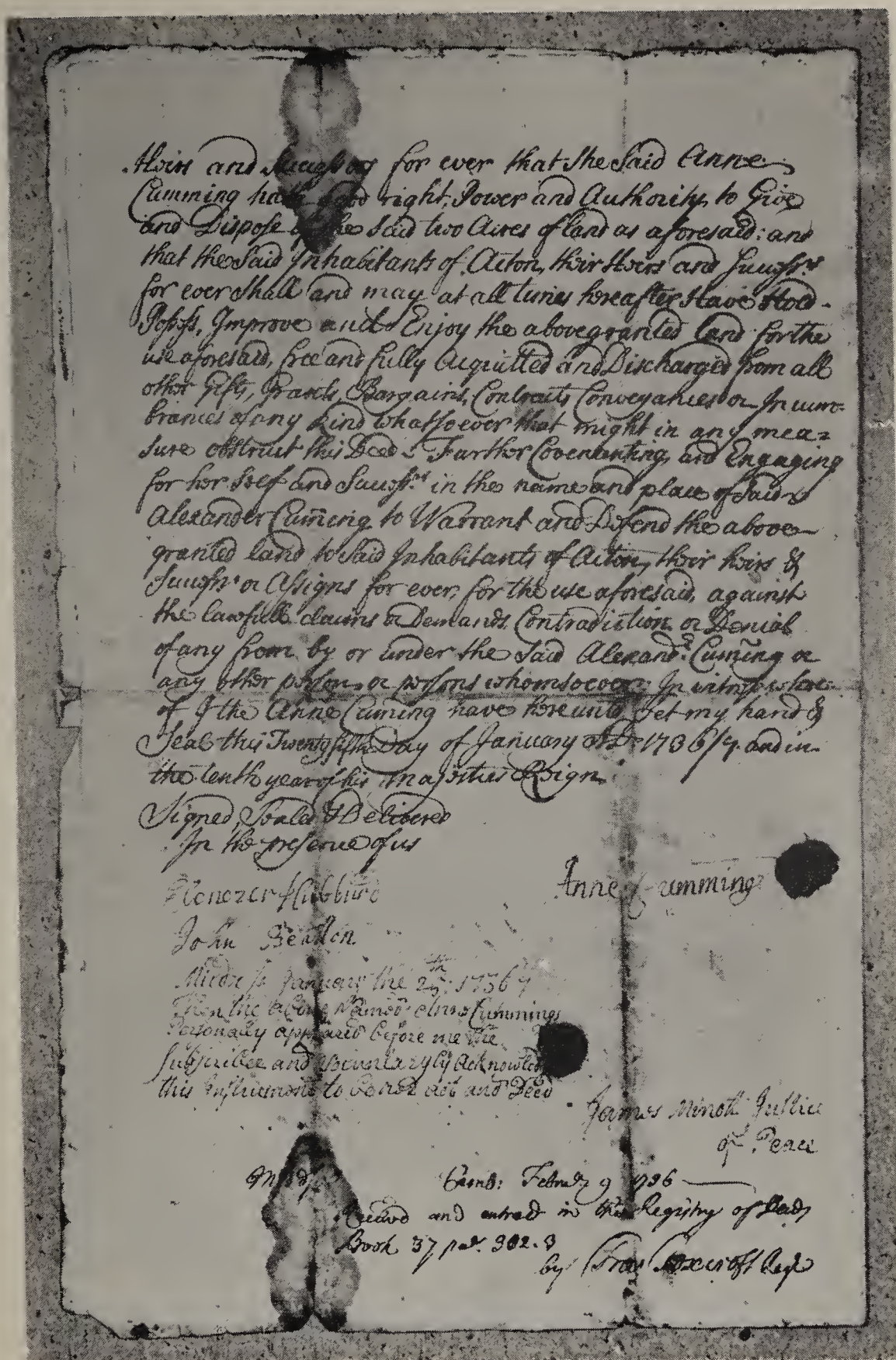
He further agreed, and this was the main purpose of the lease, to recieve and pasture dry cattle belonging to the town's people, not to exceed one hundred and twenty in number and not fewer than eighty. The cattle were to be marked by their owners and be delivered to Capt. Wheeler at his house, and the price was fixed at two shillings a head, payable one third in wheat, one third in rye or peas, and one third in Indian corn. The owners were to keep herd twelve Sabbath days yearly at the convenience of and in numbers allotted by Thomas Wheeler or his heirs.

Since the agreement was one of the important events to the establishing of what is now Acton the major portion of it is given in Appendix I. It is an interesting document, both in form and content, to those with a real interest in the history of the town. One important clause is to the effect that there shall be allowed "two shillings per defailance" if less than eighty cattle are pastured. Such a situation did come to pass in 1673 and the terms of the contract were so modified that Capt. Wheeler was entitled to recieve one shilling per head.



FAULKNER HOUSE

To all People to Whom these presents may Come
Know ye that Mrs Anne Cuming of Concord in
the County of Midd.x In the Provrnce of the Massachusetts
Bay in New England, wife of Mr. Alexander Cuming Surgeon
now abroad, and Attorney of Said Alexand.r Cuming, being
impowered and Authorised by him either Severally and by
her Self alone or Joyntly with William Douglass of Bos-
ton Physitian, to Sell Convey or Dispose of any part of the
Lands of Said Alexander Cuming whereSoever, and to Sign
Seal and Execute and Acknowledge any Deed or Deeds for the
Disposing thereof; Doth, here by for good reasons and
valuable Considerations as Attorney and in the
Name and Stead of Said Alexand.r Cuming, fully and
absolutely Give, Grant, Convey Passover and Confirm
unto the Inhibitants of the Township of Acton
In the County aforesaid, their Heirs and Successors for
ever, for the use and conveniency of a Spot for a Meet-
ing House for the Puplick worship of God; Two Acres of
land in a Second Division Lott in Said Acton; on which
two Acres of Land Standeth a Frame for a Meeting house
Said Two Acres of land is Described as follows. viz Begin-
ning at a heap of Stones, then runs west thirteen Degrees, South
Sixteen rods to a heap of Stones; then runs South thirteen De-
grees, East twenty rods to a heap of Stones, then East thir-
teen Degrees, North Sixteen rods to a heap of Stones.
then runs North Thirteen Degrees, west twenty rods
to where it began. To Have and to Hold the above
granted and Described Land, with the Privileges and
Conveniences thereof; unto the Inhabitants of Said Town-
Ship of Acton their Heirs and Successors for ever; for
their use benefit and behoof forever; for the use and
conveniency aboveSaid; and the Said Anne Cuming as
the true and Legal Attorney of Said Alexander Cuming doth
hereby in the name and Stead of Said Alexander Cuming for
him, his Heirs Execut.rs and Admin.rs Covenant, Grant and
Agree to and with the Said Inhabitants of Acton, their Heirs



Heirs and Assigns for ever that She Said Anne Cumming hath Good right Power and Authority to Give and Dispose of the Said two Acres of Land as aforesaid: and that the Said Inhabitants of Acton, their Heirs and Assigns for ever Shall and may at all times hereafter Have Hold Possess, Improve and Enjoy the above granted Land for the use aforesaid, free and fully Acquitted and Discharged from all other Gifts, Grants, Bargains, Contracts, Conveyances or Incumbrances of any Kind whatsoever that might in any measure obstruct this Deed. Further Covenanting and Engaging for her Self and Succrs in the name and place of Said Alexander Cumming to Warrant and Defend the above granted Land to Said Inhabitants of Acton, their Heirs & Succrs or Assigns for ever, for the use aforesaid, against the Lawfull claims & Demands Contradiction or Denial of any from by or under the Said Alexand. Cuming or any other Person or Persons whomsoever. In witness whereof I the Anne Cumming have hereunto Set my hand & Seal this Twenty fifth Day of January Anno 1736/7 and in the tenth year of his Majesties Reign.

Signed Sealed & Delivered
In the presence of us

Anne Cumming

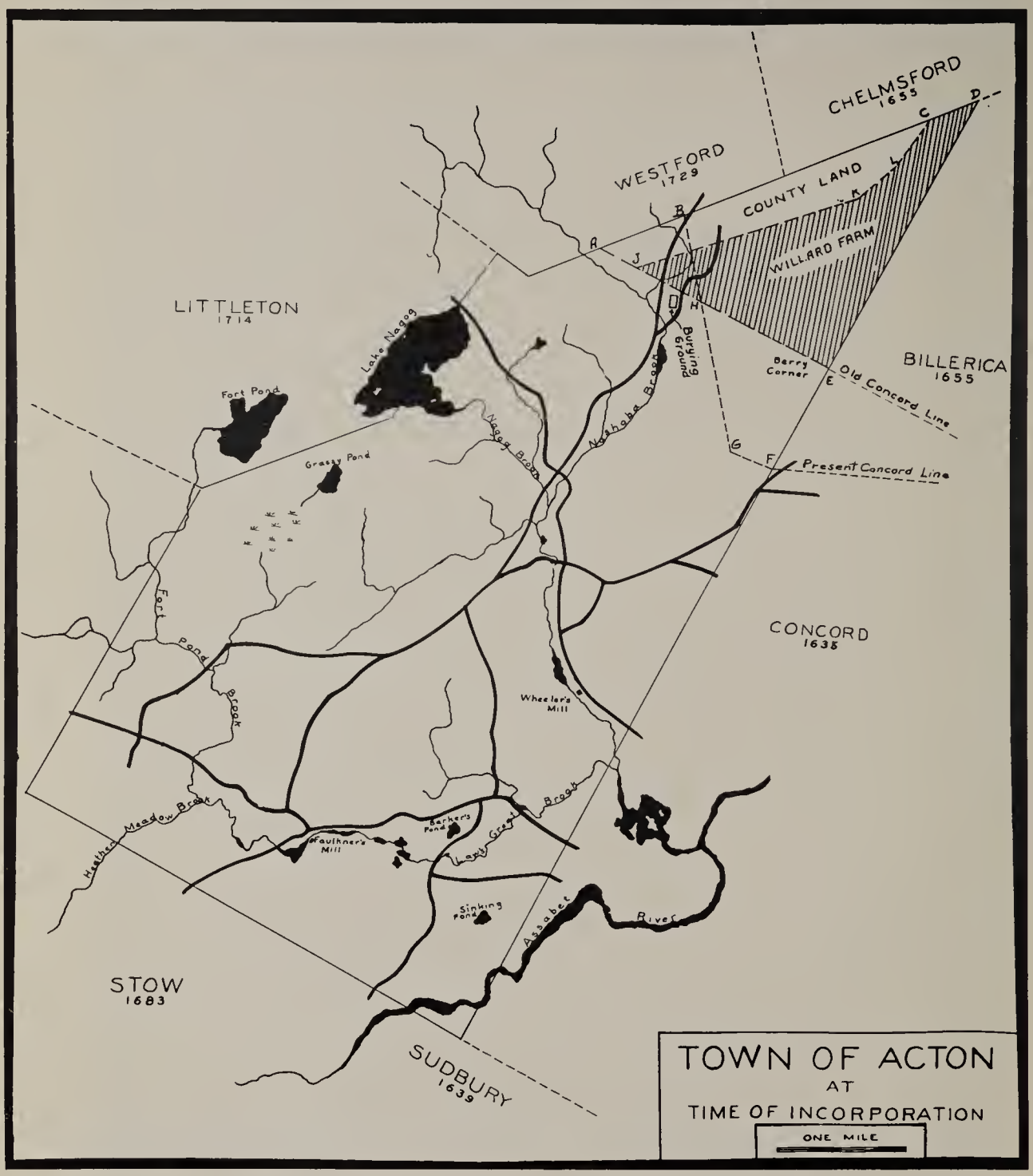
Ebenezer Hubbard
John Beaton

Acton ss January the 25th 1736/7
Then the above named Anne Cumming
Personally appeared before me the
Subscriber and Voluntarily Acknowledged
this Instrument to be her act and Deed

James Minott Justice
of Peace

Cumb: Febry 9 1736
Received and entred in the Registry of Deeds
Book 37 pa. 302. 9
by Tho. Oxnard Reg.

DEED TO LAND FOR FIRST MEETING HOUSE


CHELMSFORD
1655
WESTFORD
1729
COUNTY LAND
WILLARD FARM
LITTLETON
1714
Lake Nagog
Fort Pond
Grassy Pond
Nagog Brook
Nashoba Brook
Burying Ground
Berry Corner
Old Concord Line
Present Concord Line
BILLERICA
1655
CONCORD
1635
Fort Pond Brook
Wheeler's Mill
Meadow Brook
Faulkner's Mill
Barker's Pond
Heath's
Sinking pond
Assabet River
STOW
1683
SUDBURY
1639
TOWN OF ACTON
AT
TIME OF INCORPORATION
ONE MILE

The town of Concord laid out a road to Thomas Wheeler's grist mill, the first in Acton, located just across the present route 2A from the residence of Mr. Henry Doyle. The mill was tended for the most part by women, a Mrs. Joseph Barker being in charge among the last. In 1840, on the same site, Daniel Wetherbee built a second grist mill which was operating sucessfully as such in 1901 under the direction of Mr. Alfred Sanctuary who came to Acton from Essex Junction, Vermont, resided in town only a year or two and removed to Amherst, Massachusetts. Thereafter the mill stood idle for a time, then was remodelled and used to grind talc. This latter venture was short lived and the structure was subsequently removed completely. The old Whetherbee mill used the same water supply as the ancient Wheeler mill and many still alive can recall the canal which ran along between the highway and the railroad, passing under the tracks just a few yards south of the present grade crossing and letting into the mill pond from the left side of the present dam, which dam by the way served the old saw mill whose foundations now support the unique modern residence of Mr. Stuart Allen, long time resident of Acton and retired president of the Allen Chair Company of West Concord.

Near where the canal let into the pond there were formerly in evidence the abutments of the old iron works, called in those days a forge. Here was located a trip hammer and other implements for working iron and here Joseph Harris made the latches and hardware for the first meeting house. The ore, which was smelted with charcoal, was bog iron ore, found some rods to the southwest. The building for storing the charcoal was a short distance up the old road, going west, beyond the old walls. According to Fletcher the charcoal bed was readily determined in 1890 by striking a spade into the ground. Mr. Stuart Allen's garage now marks the spot.

The old road followed along the right side of the little stream which enters the mill pond just at the residence of Mr. Allen. Thomas Wheeler's house was beside the stream, on the west side, at the end of the lane now identified by a historical marker.

Thomas Wheeler's claim to local fame does not rest solely upon the fact that he was the town's first settler. In most rural hamlets history reverberates only in muted tones from a distance. Not so Acton, however. A Satanic connivance has ever seemed diligent to thrust it into the forefront of every crisis. In this connection Thomas Wheeler played an important role. He was a man of initiative and outstanding personal bravery as well as a born leader of men. These qualities were to have ample outlet in the imminent Indian wars, particularly the expedition to Brookfield, so fully described in the reports of Daniel Gookin, Commissioner to the Praying Indians at that period.

As more settlers, eager for land, preempted the various grants in the new Bay Colony only a decade was required to bring about the inevitable. New towns were incorporated, the frontier was thrust back and the fur traders, among whom Simon Willard was foremost, found that the Indians could no longer furnish pelts in the requisite volume unless they were provided with muskets and gun powder. The laws forbidding the sale of arms to the natives were well known to all and sundry but as usual common sense could not forestall avarice. The buyers as well as the trappers were anxious for profit, and in consequence if the Indians could not obtain guns and ammunition from the more scrupulous traders, of which Willard was one, they could always depend upon the French and the Dutch whose settlements were readily accessible.

By 1654 Middlesex County embraced seventeen towns, namely, Charlestown, Watertown, Medford, Cambridge, Concord, Sudbury, Woburn, Reading, Malden, Lancaster, Chelmsford, Billerica, Groton, Marlborough, Dunstable, Mendon and Sherburne. Worcester County was not set apart until 1731. Certain of these towns lay well to the west, sufficiently far to justly stir the apprehension and resentment of the Indians, who became increasingly restive.

By 1667 the whites in turn had become alarmed to such a pitch as to cause the General Court to promulgate an order that every town have a committee of militia and that garrison houses[1] be erected under the direction of the selectmen and the committee for use in case of necessity. Concord built several of these at widely separated points and according to Shattuck one was located in what is now Acton on the farm at present owned and operated by the Massahusetts Reformatory.

On October 13, 1669, a horse company, augmented somewhat by additions from surrounding towns, was formed by the men of Concord to supplement the already existing foot company. Thomas Wheeler, Willard's local associate in the fur trade, was chosen captain.

The first news of Indian trouble came to Concord in June 1675. At Swansea in Plymouth Colony the Wampanoags under Philip, the son of the sagacious and friendly Massasoit, had attacked and killed several settlers. A contingent of militia and volunteers sent out from Boston to quell what was assumed to be a sporadic and incipient uprising had recieved not only the surprise of their lives but also a sound whipping at the hands of an enemy both numerous and able.

In consequence the residents of Concord were justly concerned when Capt. Wheeler and certain men of the town were ordered to accompany Capt. Edward Hutchinson to the Nipmuck country, now

[1] The older portions of the Faulkner house, known to have been a garrison house, date back to this approximate time.

approximately defined by Worcester County, to confer with the Indians there in the hope of preventing, if possible, any extension of Philip's influence in that region.

On July twenty seventh Wheeler, with about a score of his troop, reported at Boston. As they passed through Cambridge the next morning four more were added to their muster roll. Three were praying Indians from Natick, Joseph and Sampson Petuhanit, brothers, and George Memecho, their kinsman. Ephraim Curtis of Sudbury was the fourth. He had traded much with the Nipmucks and was one of the most experienced explorers of the colony. He it was who had brought word of the restlessness among the Indians.

The details of the ill fated expedition are given by Fletcher (p. 239) but can, since Thomas Wheeler played such an important role in the history of Acton well bear repetition. On Sunday, August first, the troop arrived in Quabang (Brookfield). Here they were informed that the Indians whom they had expected to meet had removed to a place about ten miles distant. Wheeler delegated Curtis, together with two Brookfield men and an Indian guide, to contact the tribesmen and arrange for a formal meeting. The messengers returned with information that the place agreed upon was a field some three miles distant and that the time was to be eight o'clock the following morning. In addition they brought the disquieting report that there was a suspiciously large assemblage of excited and armed warriors for a tribe pretending peaceful pursuits. The prominent citizens of Brookfield, however, expressed confidence in the good intentions of the savages and volunteered to be present at the powwow.

Accordingly, at the appointed time, Wheeler mustered his troop and repaired to the rendezvous in company with Sergeant Prichard and Corporal Coy of the Brookfield militia and John Ayres, selectmen, with whom the Quabaug chief, Matamap, professed close friendship.

The Indians, however, did not put in an appearance. This fact, together with other disquieting circumstances reported by the scouts, led the sagacious and experienced Wheeler to advise the abandonment of the conference for the time being. Hutchinson nevertheless, loath to return with nothing accomplished, and also unduly influenced by the reasserted faith of the Brookfield men ordered the advance into the swamp country where the Indians were supposed to be loitering through sheer irresponsibility and procrastination.

For a time the route lay in an open valley but eventually the narrowness of the path, with the swamp on one side and a rocky hill on the other, forced the column to proceed in single file. Suddenly a volley of bullets and arrows, discharged from behind perfect cover, killed eight men outright, wounded five and threw the line, aggravated by the difficulty of turning about in the narrow passageway, into dis-

order. Captain Wheeler spurred his horse up the hillside, but, finding himself unhurt and perceiving that certain of his men had fallen under the fire of the enemy, who were now rushing forward to finish their work, turned about and dashed boldly forward to attack them. As he did so a well directed shot killed his horse and brought the rider to earth wounded. It would have been all over with him directly had not his son Thomas, who had likewise been hit, come to his rescue. Quickly dismounting, he placed his father in the saddle and ran by his side until he caught a riderless horse, thus enabling the two to escape with their lives.

But this was merely the beginning. All three Brookfield men had been killed at the first volley. Hutchinson received a wound of which he died within a few days. The task of extricating the command and of finding the way back to the settlement devolved upon Capt. Wheeler, already well along in years and grievously wounded. It was performed in masterly fashion. Keeping to the open country they retraced their way, with the assistance of the Indian guides, to the village of Brookfield where they took possession of the largest and strongest house and fortfied it as best they could.

Shortly the enemy appeared in superior numbers and attacked the makeshift fort with vigor. Wheeler's incapacity because of wounds brought to the front Lieutenant Simon Davis another Concord man, who conducted himself with extreme credit. To him, acting jointly with James Richardson and John Fiske, both of Chelmsford, the direction of affairs was henceforth intrusted.

Late Monday afternoon Ephraim Curtis took with him Henry Young of Concord and sought to get through for outside help but they were forced to return almost immediately bearing word that the town was surrounded and that most of the outlying homesteads were in ruins. With nightfall the Indians piled various combustibles against the house and started a fire which the English could extinguish only by exposing themselves unduly. To get the combustibles close to the walls the attackers constructed a remarkable contrivance, several rods long, of poles and barrels which they trundled forward to achieve their purpose.

For three days and nights the horrid warefare continued. The besieged were compelled to witness the mutilation of their dead comrades. The deceased Sergeant Prichard's son was killed by a thrown tomahawk as he sought to obtain supplies from their nearby home. In triumph the savages cut off his head and after kicking it about for a time in play set it upon a pole just in front of his house. A second attempt was made by the Indians to kindle a general conflagration but rain came to the assistance of the defenders. Davis, a man uncommonly gifted in prayer and deeply earnest, exhorted his men to remember that God was on their side, and to take good aim

before firing in order to conserve the rapidly diminishing supply of ammunition and powder. The prayers and hymns of the defenders were mimicked by hideous groanings of the heathen.

Twice Ephraim Curtis tried in vain to make his way through the enemy lines to obtain succor. The third time, by almost superhuman exertion and caution, he succeeded in reaching Marlborough, formerly Okamakamesit, one of Eliot's Praying Indian towns until the white man claimed the meadows, where he gave the alarm.

On the evening of the fourth day the beleaguered garrison was overjoyed at the arrival of their old friend and neighbor Major Willard, with a force of forty-six soldiers and five Indians, who hearing at Marlborough of their distress, had altered his course to come to their aid. During the night the enemy departed after having burned all the buildings except the one which sheltered the whites.

During the next two days the garrison rested while Willard's men did their best to tend the wounded and bury the dead. On Saturday afternoon Captain Thomas Lothrop's troops arrived, the first contingent of relief sent from Boston. Hampered by wounds and lack of horses it took five days for Wheeler and his followers to reach Marlborough. There Captain Hutchinson grew worse and died. Wheeler remained for the burial and then pushed on to Concord. Rumors of the Brookfield disaster had prepared the townspeople for the return of the shattered troop. October 21, 1675 was designated as a day of praise and thanksgiving for their remarkable deliverance and return.

During the weeks that followed the reports reaching Concord grew ever worse. Captain Beers and his entire command were wiped out at Northfield. Captain Lothrop and his men were massacred from ambush at Hadley. Deerfield and Springfield were left charred and stark.

Despite Captain Wheeler's sworn statement that his Praying Indian guide at Brookfield had been instrumental in the escape from the swamp and had acted throughout with faithfulness and courage, it was impossible to eradicate from the general mind a blanket hatred for all redskins. As a natural consequence the Christian Indian village of Nashoba fell under suspicion. Skeptical frontiersmen had ever looked askance at the efforts of such men as John Eliot of Roxbury to Christanize the savages and bring them into the frame work of the life of the white plantations. At the very outset of his missionary career Eliot had seen the advantage of teamwork with Simon Willard and together the pair trod many a mile together bent on profit and the dispensation of salvation.[1] Seven such villages as Eliot had

[1] If the first European to view the general locality now known as Acton was not one of the Norsemen of Norumbega then David Ingram is a possible candidate. Marooned by the famous Capt. Hawkins in the Gulf of Mexico in 1558, he walked alone to what is now Maine where he was successful in getting passage to England in one of the French fishing ships that frequented those waters each summer.

envisioned had been established in Massachusetts, albeit with the reluctant consent of the General Court. The closest of these to Concord was the aforesaid Nashoba, six miles to the westward and hard by the growing white settlement familiar to us as Concord Village.

At this point it seems opportune to give a brief history of Nashoba and clear up a misapprehension of long standing as to its location. Shattuck is responsible for the assertion that it lay partly in Acton.[1] In this he is in direct contradiction with Mr. H. J. Harwood of Littleton who, in his meticulous researches on the Indians of Nashoba[2] establishes conclusively that the Indian Plantation, which approximated a rough square about four miles on a side, lay completely outside the boundaries of Acton as now delineated. In fact Harwood goes so far as to say that he hopes that Mr. Shattuck is nearer correct in his assertions respecting the beneficial effects of Christianity upon the Indians than he is regarding the location of their village. Harwood's exact words are as follows:[3]

> *"Let us hope that the last part of the quotation from Mr. Shattuck is more trustworthy than the first; he gives no authority for saying that Nashobah was "partly in Acton" and I am inclined to think that he drew on his imagination for the statement, as I am unable to find any authority for it whatever, while, on the contrary, I have been able to locate the original Nashobah with tolerable accuracy, as I shall show hereafter, and am morally certain that the town of Concord never had a valid title to one inch of the land where the Indian town was laid out, and consequently that it was never "partly in Acton" which, as we all know, was set off from Concord"*

Eliot had established his village at Nonantum (Natick), and Tahatawan, the sachem of the Indians living to the west of Concord, had visited there and had been sufficiently impressed by the English way of life to induce his own people to draw up a set of rules with the help of the Indians:

> *"In answer to the petition of Mr. Jno. Eliot on behalf of seuerall Indians the Court grants his request viz; liberty for the Inhabitants of Nashop (Nashoba) and to the inhabit ants of Ogkoontiquonkames (Marlboro) and also the inhabitants of Hasnemesucuchoth (Grafton) to erect seuerall injan tounes in the places propounded with convenient accomodation to each provided they prejudice not any former graunts, nor shall they dispose of it without leave*

[1] Shattuck, *History of Concord*, p. 27.
[2] *The Indians of Nashobah*, H. J. Harwood, Littleton Historical Proceedings, No. 1.
[3] *History of Middlesex County, Massachusetts*, vol. 2, p. 858 (1890).

first had and obtained from this Court."

For a time it seemed as if the experiment might succeed. There was a church and an Indian choir which, according to white visitors, gave acceptably melodious renditions of a Psalm set to Indian words by Eliot.[1]

The village consisted of twenty five or thirty families and according to Harwood, Indians lived in Nashoba from 1646 or earlier to 1675. Finally, due to the disturbed state of mind of the whites, as a result of King Philips War, and in particular the killing of Jacob Shepard in Littleton[2] they were herded into prisons in Boston over the violent objection of Simon Willard. Eventually the few who were able and cared to return, were placed on what is known as the Proctor farm between Littleton and Groton.[3] The last survivor, an aged and feeble squaw named Sarah Dublet, resided there when the farm was sold in 1734. Legend has it that she spent her last days in the locality of the present village of Newtown.

Thus ended the great vision of Eliot. By the turn of the century it was obvious that avarice was to triumph over exalted ideals. The white man persistently thrust himself on to the lands promised to the red men by the authorities. In 1702 the town of Stow petitioned the General Court for all of Nashoba, claiming that the town of Groton, as well as freelance settlers, were enroaching upon it. The petition was not granted just then but the color of the future was all too clear. By the time Acton was incorporated, the Nashoba project was a thing of the past.

In all these Indian difficulties Thomas Wheeler, well beyond middle age when they commenced, showed himself to be a citizen of sound judgment and great integrity. He died in 1676 from wounds received at Brookfield. Such was Acton's first householder. As time unrolled its limitless scroll, others were to take up the torch of honor and likewise carry it with vigor and distinction.

The second owner of the Wheeler land was Nathan Robbins, whose descendants have been in possession of it ever since. A century later another Robbins, dwelling on the same land at the site now marked by the inscribed boulder located just east of the cemetery, was to be awakened by couriers in the night bearing news that caused him to rise and march his company to Concord Fight.

After the cessation of the hostilities it was deemed expedient to legalize the purchase of the land lying within the New Grant. We have already given in detail the agreement of 1660, and hence it is

[1] James Spear and his Indian choir performed May 14, 1654.

[2] Harwood, *History of Littleton*. The site of the Shepard incident in which the child, Mary, distinguished herself, is marked by an inscribed stone at the junction of Power Road with Route 2 in Littleton.

[3] The Proctor farm is the first on the left after crossing the Beaver Brook Bridge as one goes from Littleton Common toward Groton. See, *The Indians of Nashobah*, H. J. Harwood Historical Proceedings, #1.

not necessary to exhibit here the long and carefully drawn formal deed signed in 1684 by representatives of the Indians and the town of Concord. The document is in two parts, or is two distinct deeds if you will. One on May fifth conveys one thousand acres in the southerly portion of the grant and another on August fourteenth refers to a tract of eight thousand acres.[1]

Henceforth the citizens of Concord and its associated grants were busy with the building of a thriving community. Inherent in the process was the framing of the various laws and policies that emerge from the experiences of any growing society. Among those that came into being was one which stipulated that none could vote, hold office, or even serve on a jury, who were not freemen and church members. In the spring of 1689 the selectmen made the following return of non-freemen who were freeholders possessing houses and lands of the yearly value of six pounds. The list is given here because many of the persons subsequently to initiate the incorporation of Acton were descended from those mentioned. By virtue of the vote herewith recorded, they were invested with the status of freemen.

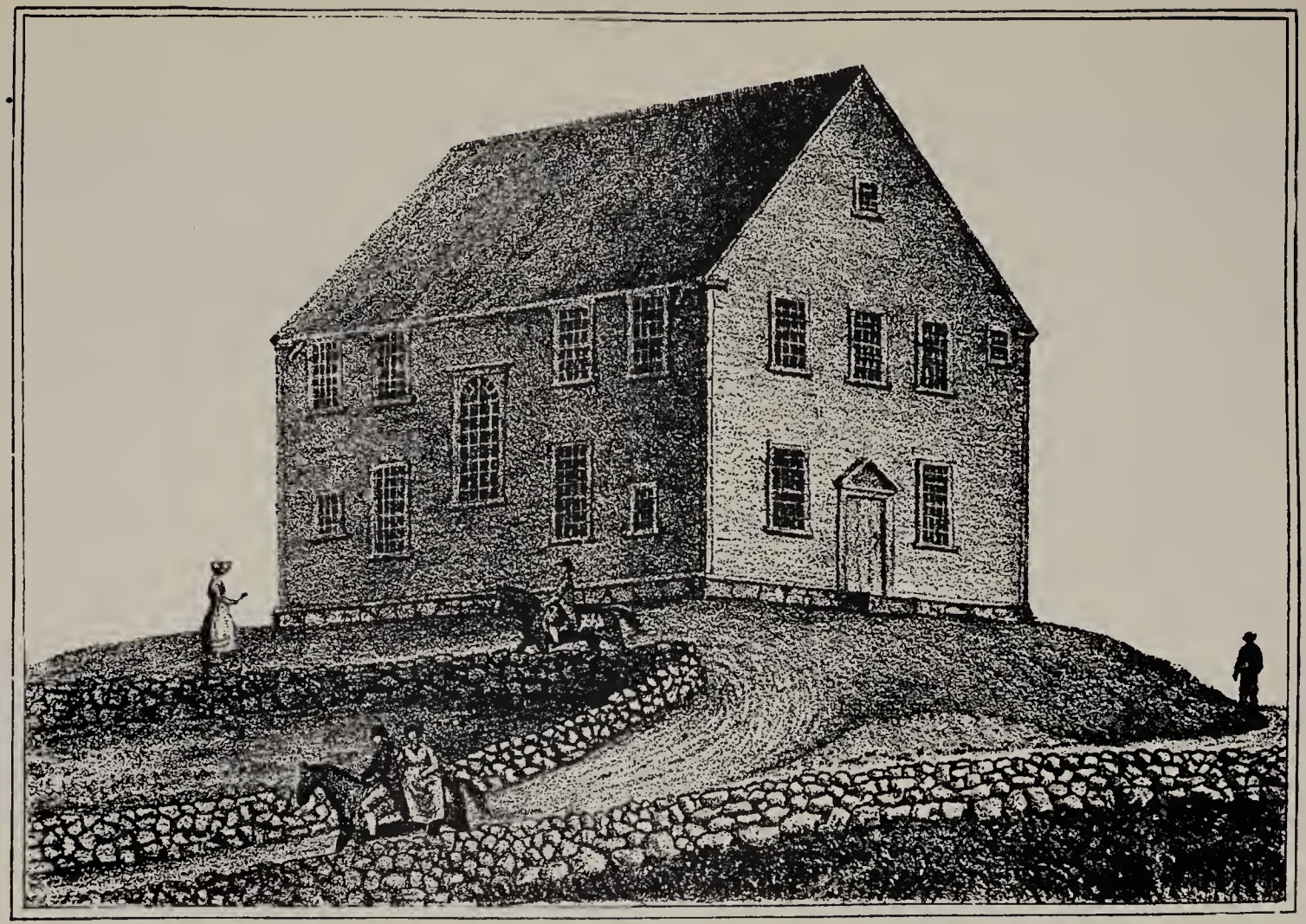
In Concord ye 3 of 1st munth 1689-90
An acount taken of the nonfreemen which are free holders, whose housing and Lands do amount to the uallew of six pounds rant by the year

Mr. James Minerd
Danell Dane
Thomas gobile, S(enior)
Robord Blood, S.
John Wheler, S.
Nemiah hunt, S.
Samuell Davis, S.
John Shaperd, S.
Abraham Tempel
Isaq Isaac Tempel
Recherd Tempel
Simon Davis
Roberd Blood
Simon Blood
Josiah Blood
Judath poter
John Jones
Nathanell Stow
Nathaell Harwood
Eliphelet fox
John Ball
Samuel flecher
Timithy Ries
Samuell Stratten
Johnethen habord
Joshua Wheler
James Smadly
Nathanell Buse
John Wood
Abraham wood
Obadiah wheler
John Haward
Thomas Wheler
Steuen Hosmer
John Hartwill

Thomas: Wheeler: Steuen Hosmor Eliphelet ffox
Homphary Baret Nathaniel: Billing: Selectmen

21o March 1689. Voted by the Court to be ffremen
Consentd Ebenezer Prout, Clerk. Jsa. Addington Secry.

[1] It is an idea to conjure with that possibly the one thousand acres mentioned makes up a part of the mysterious extra area.



THE FIRST MEETING HOUSE. 1738.



WHITE'S TAVERN
From Water Color by A. F. Davis

This action relating to freeholders was of particular interest because ever since the arrival of Sir Edmund Andros in December of 1686 there had been growing tension between the royal governor and the citizenry of the province. Modern competent historical judgment gives Sir Edmund a much cleaner bill of health than did his contemporaries. Nevertheless, being the immediate representative of a bad government, and attempting to carry out loyally and fully the orders of that government, he was doomed to turmoil and ultimate defeat. From 1686 to 1689 the governor and his council had laid taxes without consulting the tax payers, fees for the transaction of public business were unduly increased, and town meetings, except once a year for the election of officers, were prohibited.

All these practices and edicts were flagrant violations of the old charter. Even so it is possible that open insurrection might have been avoided had not Andros, undoubtedly acting under orders from the home government, declared all land titles null and void. In vain did the colonists argue purchase from the Indians. In vain did they assert that those who had cleared the land and defended it with their lives had the most just claim to it. He replied that he cared no more for an Indian signature than for "the scratch of a bear's paw". To the claim of long occupation he answered that no length of possession could validate a grant from one who had no title.

Just when the colonists were seething under this crowning indignity word came that Andros' master, James II, was being pushed from the throne by Willian of Orange with the backing of England's Protestants. Here indeed was a rare opportunity to liquidate the detested Andros. Accordingly on the morning of April nineteenth, 1689 (prophetic day in American history) the Concord military company under the command of Lieutenant John Heald started for Boston to assist in the revolt.

The insurrection was an immediate success. Andros and his supporters became prisoners of old Simon Bradstreet, last governor to be elected under the charter. King William, although continuing the practice of appointing a royal governor, restored to the General Court its former functions regarding financial and political matters. The experiment in absolute autocracy was over and the men who were later to found the town of Acton had a prominent part in it.

With the resumption of more normal living conditions the grant settlements grew apace and took on more and more characteristics of communal life. In 1698 the Village held its own March meeting. It was in the form of a special session immediately following the Concord town meeting, on the same day and in the same building, but the proceedings were recorded separately by the Concord town clerk. The custom continued until 1710 at which time the Village began electing a clerk of its own. As soon as these independent sessions

were initiated the question immediately arose as to what persons were entitled to vote. Obviously those who resided therein or who owned land therein had rights in the matter. Accordingly at the meeting on March 7, 1697 a committee consisting of Corporal Fletcher, John Jones, Jonathan Hubbard, Lt. Prescote, Sergt. Wood, Nathaniel Jones, Lt. Davis, William Wilson and Thomas Brown was appointed to make investigation and determine a list of proprietors for the town's New Grant.[1] The report was submitted and accepted at a town meeting held on May 3, 1698. While it does not give definite information as to who lived in the New Grant on the above date it does specify those who had a vital interest in the territory eventually to become Acton.

A perusal of the old records brings to light every now and then the fact that human nature runs true to form regardless of political or religious pressures that may be imposed upon it. Avarice, shiftlessness, laziness, stupidity, carelessness and contentiousness cannot be legislated out of mankind and if the incentive be of more than average potency neither will they succumb to prayer, terror or imminence of punishment. It would appear that certain of the folk who obtained the right to cultivate and improve the land in the New Grant were not overzealous concerning some of the terms of agreement, particularly with respect to payment and industry. On July 17, 1700 we find the selectmen agreeing to "call ye proprietors together about September 1 to decide what to do about Jno. Law & his son Stephen who do neglect & refuse to agree and hire land & meadow that they do now improve in ye village".

The meeting mentioned above was convened on the third of September and voted —

> *To empower the selectmen to use such methods with Stephen Law as may effect some absolute conclusion as to his eregular improvement of ye premises.*
> *Also voted to empower selectmen to set bounds to lands which Jno. Law doth improve to prevent him from encroaching father upon the Townes New Grant.*

Although we are not in possession of the details of the difficulty here mentioned we can glean some light from the term "improve". It meant that the landowner was to clear a fixed portion of the land of trees and put it into condition for crops and in addition presumably, if he lived on it, build a house and barn and perform such other labors as might be expected of one seeking to establish a home and family.

The Law land was located round about the present junction of School Street and Laws Brook Road. It would appear from the

[1] The report is given in detail in Appendix II.

record that Stephen Law was not overly inclined to work himself into a decline and that his father was prone to edge over into territory not included in his grant. After all pulling stumps and clearing brush is not congenial employment. It is easy to put it off or to move over into open meadow if it lies close at hand. The point was, however, that it was the custom for the town to rent the meadowland to the highest bidder and if certain bidders found that part of the hay crop had been harvested from their specific area they doubtless made their grievances known to the selectmen in no uncertain terms. If one reads between the lines one can see much in the following vote taken at a town meeting held in June of 1702

> *voted that a committee be appointed to let out village meadows & treat with Stephen Law.*

Simultaneously the famous feud with the occupants of the Willard Farms was merrily stewing since at the same meeting a committee was appointed to settle the line between the Village and the Farms. The committee acted with expedition but without success since on June 25th the following report was submitted

> *Committee on Willard line notified sons of Robt. Blood & ye two Buttricks that married his daughters they gave meeting to y committee but were so unreasonable in their propositions that ye meeting broke up after much time was spent & nothing done.*

The embroglio went on interminably apparently since three years later we find the town voting to empower the selectmen to levy taxes to defend any suits that might arise between the town and the successors of Robert Blood. In taking such action they were merely being canny since the controversey persisted for at least another generation.

All this agitation over boundaries led to one sound New England custom which continues to this day. At an early date it became the practice for contiguous towns to appoint joint committees whose function it was to perambulate the bounds and see to it that they were well defined. In the beginning the markers were merely stone cairns but eventually, with the opening of the several granite quarries in what is now Acton, cut stone monuments were set up. Each five years the joint representatives of the towns inspect the corner posts and paint thereon the date of the visitation.

Two entries in the Concord town records respecting this custom are of interest, the first because it throws some light on the significance of Berry Corner and the second because it bears on the question of the Stow corner.

> *April* 9, 1702 *Lt Davis, Thomas Brown sr & Sam'l Jones being appointed by ye selectmen to renew ye line between y Old Bounds & ye new grant or village. They in observance*

of sd order from ye selectmen on ye day above did attend sd service & began at Bery Corner & carried on ye line marking trees and laying stones to ye merkers generally untill they came to ye north river near ye southerly corner of ye old Town Bounds.

Here is additional evidence to support the assertion previously made that Berry Corner was the original northwest corner of the square grant made to Concord in 1635. One cannot be certain from the wording of the report whether or not they actually reached the old corner. They speak of the north river by which they must certainly mean the Assabet.[1] Since the line crosses the Assabet three times within half a mile of the old corner they may have stopped at the river rather than try to cross it, particularly if the day were cold and raw and the river at high or even medium stage. Any Acton boy that has roamed the countryside knows that the Assabet can be forded in places but there are others where one would have to swim at low water.

The second entry is as follows

May 14, 1706 *Voted Abraham Temple, Jno. Barker & Thomas Brown a committee to perambulate the lines between sd village & ye town of Stow also with other neybour adjacent thereto & where lines are dark and dubeous then to be impowered to settle ye line.*

Here is adequate evidence that all was not well with the lines in the vicinity of Stow corner. It emphasizes the fact that if any error, unintentional or otherwise, occurred at the time of the Beers and Noyes survey it was still unleavened and pregnant with future possibilities concerning which more will be heard anon.

One more case will be cited since it not only brings to light interesting boundary matters but in addition establishes the presence of another early family within the grant.

Nov. 7, 1707 *The selectmen being cited in ye behalf of Mr. Leverett to join with a committee appointed by the sd Leverett in renewing ye bounds with ye Indian Plantation called Nashoby. The sd selectmen appointed Thomas Brown Sr. to take Abraham Temple and Jno. Barker Jr with him and attend that service the wch was done so far as to meet with ye committee at Jno. Witherbyes at Stow but cold not effect ye business by reason ye committee did not all appear. And upon ye twenty f--- day of sd november they were cited again upon ye same account and only Thomas Brown then was employed who met sd committee at Nashoby on ye 25th day and on ye 26th we ran the line between ye Indian plantation & ye Powerses from*

[1] Spelled Asibath and Isabaeth on documents dated about 1650.

nagog pond at ye westerly end thereof to ye line of Chelmsford toward Tadmuck & renewed that line all along there.

The Powers land above mentioned appears to have been located within an area subsequently ceded to Littleton. In 1707 the town of Westford was not in existence but was later set off from Chelmsford and was known locally as Tadmuck before its incorporation.

At the town meeting a year later we find an interesting action taken respecting the iron works already mentioned in connection with the mill of Thomas Wheeler. It was recorded that

Sam'l Jones with ye rest of ye owners of the New Ironworks put in a petition to the proprietors of the village to give them liberty to Improve ye pine trees yt were blooded for to make cole for their forge. The which liberty was freely granted to them by said proprietors only reserving such trees as were suitable for board logs as also prohibiting sd owners from falling other green timber that grows upon sd village for that purpose.

Apparently at that time the way to improve a pine tree was to cut it down. More important, however, is the fact that we learn that it was the custom to eliminate the pitch, probably by girdling, and leave the tree to die before making the charcoal for the smelters. The large logs were, by the above edict, reserved for the saw mills.

At the conclusion of the regular Concord town meeting of June 7, 1710 the proprietors of the Village met and agreed that the time had come for the Village to have a separate clerk to take charge of its particular affairs, thereby relieving the Concord town clerk of that portion of his duties. Ensign Thomas Brown was nominated by the moderator and chosen by a show of hands. By that action Thomas Brown, although he cannot be called Acton's first town clerk, can be recorded as the first to be entrusted with the transaction of the matters that led up to its birth as a town. According to Shattuck (p. 280) the succeeding Village Clerks[1] were Jonathan Prescott (1715 - 1728), John Flint (1728 - 1745), Stephen Hosmer (1745 - ?), John Robbins (1786 - ?). Just what the duties of these clerks could have been after the incorporation of Acton in 1735 is a matter of conjecture.

The events of the next decade or two are not of special interest except in so far as they indicate indirectly a growth in population, an accelerated sense of security and homogeneity among the settlers, and the concommitant emergence of the notion that the time was ripening for the setting off of a new town. As soon as mills and iron works and cultivated fields, together with other characteristics of communal life, had developed, the urge for distinct political status followed inevit-

[1] See Appendix III for complete list of Selectmen, Town Clerks and Town Treasurers from 1735 to 1950.

ably. Equally potent were the factors of religion, climate and geography. The church was still the supreme force in the scheme of things. No new town could be granted an act of incorporation by the General Court unless the citizens thereof solemnly agreed to erect within a specified time a proper meeting house and arranged for the dignied support of a qualified minister. In most instances this was a serious strain upon the resources of the petitioners.

The residents of the Village eventually reached the conviction that they were equal to the challenge. For years they had taken the five, six, or even eight mile trek in some cases, to the Concord church despite the elements. Now they concluded that to wrestle annually and simultaneously with sin and the rigors of a viscious New England winter was no longer a necessary hardship. They were well aware that the Lord chastened those whom He loveth but they sensibly decided that the errant sinner might take his punishment conviently close to home. He would still get enough to remain humble and cognizant of the power of the Creator.

According to Shattuck (p. 280) the residents of the Village petitioned the town in vain in 1731 to be set off as a separate precinct. He further states that three other requests of the same nature met a similar fate and points out that evidently the petitioners preferred precinct to township status.

It is difficult to reconcile this assertion with the record of the following vote taken from the town meeting minutes of May 22, 1732:

> *Propounded whether the town would sett of the Village or town's New Grants to be a separate township and it passed in the negative.*

Certainly nothing could be more definite than the words "separate township". If four attempts for precint status were made they must have been put forward previous to the above date unless one is resigned to the conclusion that the petitioners oscillated between the two desires. In any event the voters of Concord in meeting assembled on March 4, 1735 voted

> *to set off the village or town's New Grant a sep. town together with Major Willard's farm the inhabs. and proprietors petition the gen'l court for sanction.*

Here is an amazing right about face. After repulsing four attempts at independence on the part of the citizens of the Village the Concord electorate have a suden change of heart and not only grant the request but throw in the Willard Farms for good measure. If one chose to be cynical one might conjecture that there had been some unpublished but slick politics by means of which the potential residents of Acton obtained considerably more territory than they requested in return for which Concord was enabled to dispose of an old and

pestiferous problem.

Samuel Hunt and others appeared at the General Court to make the necessary pleas and on June 30 the final action was taken and the petitioners were instructed to proceed with the organization of the Town of Acton,

> *and the Grate and General Court Did Set off the village Together with the Farms caled the Willard Farms a separate Town by the name of Acton and ordered the Town to be Assembled In order to Chuse Town officers in the words following*
>
> *In the House of Representatives June ye* 27, 1735 *ordered that John Heald one of the Principle Inhabitants of the Town of Acton In the County of middlesex be and hereby is fully authorized and Impowered to assemble the freeholders and other qualified voters In ye Town as soon as may be in some convenient Place in said Town to make Choice of Town officers to stand till the anniversary meeting in March next*
>
> *Sent up for concurrance*
> J. Quincy Speaker
>
> *In Council June* 30, 1735
> T Mason, Deput Secry
>
> *Read and (word illegible)*
> *July ye* 1, 1735
> *consented to*
> J. Belcher

By this action of the General Court, signed by Governor Jonathan Belcher,[1] the town of Acton was brought into being. Three days later on July third, exactly a full century after the incorporation of the mother town, and almost exactly upon the day subsequently to become the birthday of the nation, the act of incorporation was passed. There is about this fact an uncanny tinge of prophesy relative to the promptness with which Acton was to participate in the military and political events that lay far in the unknown future.

For purposes of completeness the exact wording of the Act of Incorporation is herewith given.

> *Whereas the inhabitants and proprietors of the Northwesterly part of Concord, in the County of Middlesex, called the Village or New Grant, have represented to this court they labor under great difficulties by reason of their remoteness from the place of public worship and therefore desire that they and their estates, together with the farms called the Willard Farms, may be set off a distinct and separate township for which they have also obtained the consent of the town of Concord:*

[1] Jonathan Belcher, (1681-1757) for whom Belchertown was named, served as Colonial governor of Massachusetts and New Hampshire from 1730 to 1741.

Be it therefore enacted by his Excellency the Governor, Council and Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, that the said Northwesterly part of Concord together with the said farms be, and hereby are set off, constituted and erected into a distinct and separate township by the name of Acton, and agreeably to the following boundaries, namely, beginning at the Southwest corner of Concord old bounds, then southwesterly on Sudbury and Stow line till it comes to Littleton line, then bounded Northerly by Littleton, Westford and Chelmsford, then Easterly by Billerica till it comes to the Northwest corner of Concord old bounds and by said bounds to the place first mentioned.

And that the inhabitants of the lands before described and bounded by and hereby are vested with all the town privileges and immunities that the inhabitants of other towns within this Province are or ought by law to be vested with.

Provided that the said inhabitants of the said town of Acton do, within three years of the publication of this Act, erect and finish a suitable house for the public worship of God and procure and settle a learned orthodox minister of good conversation and make provision for his comfortable and honorable support.

By this act of incorporation Acton was finally and completely severed from Concord and launched upon its own career. The newly formed town was no longer upon the frontier. It had incorporated towns on all sides, ranging from centenarian Concord up through Sudbury (1639), Chelmsford (1655), Billerica (1655), Stow (1683), Littleton (1714) to infant Westford (1729).

It may be of interest to digress momentarily to observe that certain very elderly persons at the turn of the century were in the habit of pronouncing Billerica as though it had y as its final letter. This was taken with indulgence and regarded as a Yankee peculiarity since the same treatment was accorded the words America and Africa. A map of old Chelmsford, however, surprisingly has the word Bilirikye printed boldly upon it. (Mass. Archives, Ancient Plans, v. 112, p. 81).

Some explanatory comment relative to the map of Acton at the time of its incorporation may be helpful. Careful study of a map drawn November 6, 1700 (Mass. Archives, Ancient Plans, v. 1, p. 191), after due allowance for variations in the magnetic needle, makes clear the following:

1. The northeast boundary of Concord Village was the line AJHE, a continuation of the Concord-Billerica line.

2. The Willard Farm was the area EHJKLCD, the line ED having been, so a note on the map asserts, defined by Mr. Willard himself in 1658.

3. The area ABCLKJ is distinctly set off from the Willard Farm and labelled as county land. Since the boundaries of Acton as incorporated distinctly state that it was bounded northerly by Westford and Chelmsford this county land must have been included in order to make no alteration in the Chelmsford line which had been established eighty years previously.

4. One interesting observation that should not go unnoticed is that on this old map of 1700 what has come to be called Berry Corner appears as "bury corner". The reason is obscure unless it has some loose reference to the old north burying ground, which, however, lay a little over a mile to the westward.

5. When Carlisle was set off as a precinct in 1780 an old map dated November 1779 (Mass. Archives, Ancient Plans, v. 226, p. 180 1/2) shows that the boundaries envisioned by the petitioners from Acton, Billerica, Chelmsford and Concord placed the John Heald house some distance inside the new precinct. When Carlisle eventually emerged as an incorporated town the line agreed upon was BHGF as it exists today, with the John Heald house just barely inside the Acton limits.

In concluding this phase of the record the question naturally arises concerning the reason for choosing the name Acton for the newly organized town. No known documentary evidence bears upon the point. The records of Concord and the minutes of Concord Village for the period immediately preceding 1735 are completely silent in this respect. The word derives from the old Saxon form Ac-tun signifying an oak settlement or a hamlet in the oaks. This fact together with other information appears in a brochure put out for the benefit of tourists by the authorities of Acton, England, a municipal borough (population 67,424, census of 1951) of the county of Middlesex, about seven miles from London. It is the largest of several Actons in England, was at one time the residence of Henry III, and was the center of Puritanism throughout the rule of Cromwell. It is possible that some of the influential freeholders here in Massachusetts, having leanings in that direction, felt the propriety of having an Acton in Middlesex County on both sides of the ocean.

A second alternative has to do with a legend, often repeated at the turn of the century by extremely aged Acton residents, and also mentioned by Fletcher, to the effect that the particular Lord Acton regnant in England in or about 1735 offered to provide a bell for the first meeting house, in recognition of which generous offer, the town was christened for him. The legend goes on to say that subsequently the gratuity had to be declined because sufficient funds

were not forthcoming, after the expense of erecting the meeting house, to build and equip a belfry of adequate size and sturdiness.

In connection with this legend the author has had the benefit of several months of research by Alderman L. J. Caffrey of Wembley, Middlesex, England, who, having history and genealogy as a hobby, became deeply interested in the question. The results of his findings may be summarized as follows: (a) No record exists connecting the family name of Acton with the town of Acton, Middlesex. The name of that city derives obviously from its proximity in early times to an oak forest round about. In fact Old Oak Common is located nearby. (b) There are five other Actons of which three, Acton Scott, Acton Round, and Acton Burnell, are in Shropshire, where also there are many branches of the Acton family. The head of the family has been a baronet for several hundred years. The fifth baronet, Richard, lived from 1711 to 1790 and it must have been he, if anybody, who made the offer of the bell. He would have been twenty-four in 1735 and hence could have been sufficiently mature to have made the offer or even to have visited Massachusetts.

There are however, several objections to the legend. In the first place, as Mr. Caffery points out, no Lord Acton existed at the time in question. Richard mentioned above was a baronet. The first person to carry the title of Lord Acton was not born until 1834. He was a professor at Cambridge and sat for five years in the British Parliament. It can be argued of course that in the new America titles were held in so little repute in New England that the distinction between a lord and a baronet was exceedingly hazy.

Of greater consequence is the fact that the records of the town disclose no reference to the naming of Acton or to the acceptance or refusal of a bell. This is particularly significant when coupled with the fact that at the time in question it was customary to hold town meetings to consider at length a mass of minutiae relating to local affairs. It is stretching credulity abnormally to assume that such an important matter as a free church bell should be completely ignored.

Obviously the name had to be chosen before the act of incorporation could be drawn up and passed in 1735. It may have been selected as early as 1732 when Concord first agreed to the setting off of the village as a separate town. As has been previously pointed out the Village elected its own clerk for a considerable period before 1735 but among those records no word appears relative to the naming of the town.

In spite of this lacuna there still exists the possibility that an offer was made unofficially by Richard Acton to some Massachusetts friend, in which case the tenative bequest and subsequent refusal never reached the floor of a town meeting for formal consideration. It may also be kept in mind that even though this were the case

the name of Acton could nevertheless have been chosen in recognition of the generous gesture.

These various postulates leave the dilemma unsolved and in the final analysis the evidence seems to favor the conclusion that the name came from Acton, Middlesex, for reasons in some measure nostalgic.

HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF ACTON

PART II

1735 - 1750

At the time of its incorporation, Acton was well settled in the sense that the families were equably distributed over the whole area of the township. This was in part due to the fact that the soil varied greatly in fertility and as a consequence desirable farm land must needs be utilized wherever found. Stony hillsides that could be advantageously planted to orchards were only occasionally adjacent to favorably located upland that would produce hay and seed crops in abundance. Over extensive areas glacial detritus of all sizes abounded. In other places the native ledges of granite and schist lay bare and forbidding. The thousands of man-hours that went into the erection of the interminable stone walls of New England were expended in large part as a by-product of the clearing of the land. In this respect Acton was no exception. Loose rock, submerged boulders and stubborn outcrops were the chief bete noire of the farmer. Even though the Indian had ceased to be a major concern, nature still provided generously of annoyances to test the soul of the pioneer.

There is extant no assuredly complete record of the hardy folk who made up the town's population at the instant of its inception but a study of the reputable sources, together with the excellent map drawn by former town clerk Horace F. Tuttle, brings to light the following list of family names appearing in the interval 1735-36:

Barker	Farr	Law (Laws)
Barnes	Faulkner	Parlin
Barret (Barit)	Forbush (Furbush)	Piper
Billing	Fletcher	Prescott
Brabrook	Harris	Procter
Brooks	Hayward	Robbins
Cleaveland	Heald	Shepherd
Cragon (Cragin)	Hosmer	Wheeler
Cutting	Hunt	White
Davis	Jones	Woods
Dudley	Knight	Wooley
Emery	Lamson	Wright

In addition the names of Darby, Conant, and Pierce appear among the town officers chosen in 1737. Since it is improbable that an immediate newcomer would be so selected it may be assumed that these persons were residents at the time of the incorporation.

The initial business of the infant town was to get the governmental machinery into gear and set about the stipulated task of erecting the

meeting house. Those entrusted with the various duties were chosen on the basis of merit alone we may be certain. Sinecures are the product of established and comfortable society. These were men of substance and integrity who could bring sound judgment and energy to the project at hand. Fortunately their names are preserved and it will not be amiss to inscribe them in the record in detail for the information of the readers of the future. Homely Biblical names they are and the men to whom they applied were worthy pioneers in the promised land, men with vision and faith and determination to bring their plans to fruition. May those who claim Acton as their native soil feel the challenge of the example of these forefathers and the impact of their fidelity to a trust whereof later generations have been the beneficiaries.

John Heald (1639-1775) Acton's first chosen selectman, a deacon of its first church, member of the committee to build the church and a member of the committee to select the first minister. He lived a long and full life and died at the age of eighty-two about a month after Concord Fight. His homestead was on the road now known as Carlisle Street just a few yards from the Carlisle line (historical marker indicates the house). Subsequent residents were Lt. John Heald 1762, Timothy Brown 1800, John Nickles. Mr. Lawrence W. Marshall lives on the place today.

Thomas Wheeler, member first board of selectmen and town clerk for 1735 and 1736. He lived near Nehemiah's Hill, on or near the site of the house now occupied by Winston K. Newman on Main Street.

Joseph Fletcher, Member of the first board of selectmen, chosen with John Heald as one of the two deacons of the first church, member of the committee to secure the first minister. He lived on what is now known as Parker Street, near where it crosses the railroad, on the homesite now owned by Mr. Jorgen Larson. Subsequent residents were Capt. Daniel Fletcher, Stephen Shepherd, Benjamin Wilde (grandfather of the donor of Acton Memorial Library), Asa Parker and Frank Barker.

Simon Hunt, selectman and town clerk, 1737-1743, member of the committee to build the first church. He had just built a new house in 1735 which was subsequently owned by John Hunt, Jonathan Hunt, Joseph P. Reed, John Coffin, Sidney Richardson and at present by Paul Richardson. As one goes along Central Street toward West Acton, it is the last house on the right before crossing the railroad tracks.

Samuel Wheeler, member of the committee to secure the first minister, was a neighbor of John Heald and lived on a homesite at the extreme end of what is now known as Wheeler Lane. None of the buildings are standing. Subsequent residents were Gershom Davis, John Hayward, Jr., Daniel Davis (who ran a mill there in 1775) Lt. Phinehas Wheeler, Francis Robbins.

Ammiruhammah Faulkner, member of the committee to secure the first minister. His residence still stands in South Acton, and is plainly designated by a historical marker. He came to Acton and erected his mill at the "Great Falls" of the "Great Brook". Subsequent residents were Francis Faulkner, Francis Faulkner, Jr., and Col. Winthrop E. Faulkner. Mr. Faulkner lived in what had been a garrison house erected long before his arrival in Acton. It is today the oldest house in town by a wide margin. Col. Winthrop E. Faulkner who was born in 1805 used to say that when he was a boy he was told that it was then a hundred and fifty years old, which would put the date of erection at about 1670. According to Fletcher the main room could accomodate one hundred persons. The spaces between the side beams were filled with brick to make it fire proof against the shots of the enemy. Two small glass windows, about the size of oranges, were put in the door of the main room to make it possible to watch the proceedings of the court which was once held there by Francis Faulkner, the justice. The old chimney, seven by nine feet, of solid brick, was furnished with three large fireplaces and an oven below and an oven in the attic for smoking hams, and large enough to accomodate all the neighbors, with hooks attached in the arch where the hams could remain suspended until called for.

The committee to get out the timber for the meeting house consisted of Samuel Wheeler and Simon Hunt, already mentioned together with

Jonathan Parlin. He lived in the vicinity of the old north burying ground. His grave is marked by a well preserved slate stone which states that he died January 19, 1767 at the age of sixty-nine. His son Samuel, and two subsequent generations lived on the farm owned for many years by Thomas Hammond and later by Willis Holden.

Daniel Shepherd. He lived on the farm subsequently owned by John Cole in 1800, and later by Alvin Raymond and Jedidiah Tuttle. No building exists there today but

the location is recognizable by a cellar hole about twenty rods east of Hosmer Street at the point where it crosses a small brook just south of the house of Mr. Sid Laffin.

John Shepherd. He was a brother of Daniel and presumably a bachelor since he did not marry, have offspring, or die in Acton so far as the records disclose. It is possible, of course, that he left Acton for good, subsequent to the building of the meeting house.

Jonathan Billing. He was a stone mason and was engaged to do the pointing of the underpinning of the church. He lived on what is now known at Esterbrook Road on the homesite at present owned by Mrs. Charles Baxter. He served as town treasurer from 1739 to 1778. Subsequent residents on the place were his son Jonathan, Paul Dudley, Calvin Harris and Butterfield Harris.

Pursuant of the instructions of the General Court, Mr. John Heald called a preliminary meeting of the citizens on July 21, 1735. The following is a copy of the minutes:

By virtue of this order above ritten the sd John Heald Did assemble the Inhabitants of the Town of Acton on the twenty first Day of July 1735 *and then Proseded as followeth*

Leut. John Heald was chosen moderator of the meeting, Thomas Wheeler was chosen Town Clerk and was sworn before Colon'l Flint Esqr. Leut. John Heald and Joseph Fletcher and Thomas Wheeler was chosen Selectmen and assessors and was sworn before Colon'l Flint Esqr. They made choice of Jonathan Wheeler and Amos Prescott Constables with John Barker town Treasurer, surveyors of Highways Jonathan Parlin, John Cragon and Sam'l Hayward Each of which was sworn, surveyor of hemp and flax for that year Simon Hunt, tything man John Brooks, fence viewers and Drovers David Procter and Jonathan Hosmer, Hogreeves Jonathan Billing, Daniell Shepard and Joseph Wheeler. Each was sworn as the law directs.

The next few weeks were busy ones. Much important work had to be done and numerous weighty decisions made that demanded the considered opinion of the whole town. Foremost among these were the questions of taxation and the location and erection of the meeting house. In consequence several meetings were necessary, the first being convened at the home of Joseph Barker[1] on October 13, 1735 for the purpose of taking action upon the following four articles constituting Acton's earliest town warrant:

[1] The Joseph Barker house stood on the west side of Taylor Road opposite the present residence of Mr. Dunn.

1. *To see if the town will agree to have there lands Taxt and se if the Town will Chuse one or more Persons to Petition the Grate and General Court for a Tax on sd Lands.*
2. *To se if the Town will Begin to Build a meeting house this year and what way they will do it in.*
3. *To see what money the Town will Raise to Defray Town Charges this year.*
4. *To se if the Town will Pitch upon a Place to set sd meeting house on.*

The vote was affirmative upon article one and John Heald was chosen to present the petition to the General Court. The second article failed to prevail, it presumably being considered by the majority to be more practical to defer action until the town was better organized. On the third article thirty pounds was set as the limit of the town budget for the ensuing year. On article four it was decided, according to the quaint language of clerk Thomas Wheeler to "Set thir meeting house in the Sentre".

This apparently simple decision having been made, however, it immediately became obvious, in what has come to be recognized as true Acton form on all important issues, that the location of the center was a moot question having transcendent ramifications. All through the autumn and winter the argument thrived amain. Evidence scientific, political, geographical and religious was brought to the fray. The selectmen met time and again, town meetings were called, votes were passed and nullified with abandon as one faction or another had temporary ascendancy. Nevertheless it was all sound democratic procedure conducted under parliamentary decorum that has made the New England town meeting unparalleled as a school of civic consciousness.

The true inwardness of what was transpiring can best be appreciated by excerpts from the records.

> *Acton, Nov. ye* 10*th* 1735, *At a General Town meeting of the Inhabitants of the above sd Town Propounded wither they will Reconsider thare vote that they will Set thare meeting house in the Sentre voted thay will not Reconsider. To se if the Town will make any Preparation towards building a meeting house voted they will Do nothing on that articule.*

Sometime previous to November 24, 1735 the selectmen, in an attempt to settle the matter impartially, had engaged surveyors to make the proper measurements and ascertain the center of the town. When the data was in hand they met on the above date and drew up a town warrant containing the following articles:



BROOKS TAVERN
From a Water Color by A. F. Davis



JONES TAVERN

1. *To have the Surveyors Report that was Chosen to find the Centre.*
2. *To se if the Town will Reconsider thare vote that they Set thare meeting house in the Centre and agree to Set it a few rods to the Northwest of a black oak marked with an ax and attested to be the Centre by Ebenezer Prescutt or to se if the Town will agree to measure from the most Extrem Corners and find the Centre and Chuse men for that Purpus.*

To the modern reader, viewing the proposal through the perspective of the centuries, it seems fair enough but the citizens when assembled on the first Monday in December made short shrift of the matter by immediately dismissing both articles and voting to adjourn. The reason for this cavalier procedure is not known. It is a recorded fact, however, that the meeting, as well as others, was held outdoors around a fire. Housing facilities being non-existant for any considerable group, the practice had much in its favor. It had also the added advantage of placing the voters at the sites under consideration.

Undismayed by the failure, the selectmen submitted two new propositions three weeks later at a meeting convened on December 29th.

1. *To se if the Town will Reconsider thare vote that they will Set thare meeting house in the Centre and agree to Set it on a knowl with a Grate many Pines on it Lying Southwesterly about twenty or thirty Rods of a black .oak Tree whare the fier was made the Last meeting or to Se if the Town will agree to Set thare meeting house on a knowl to the North of sd oak tree whare they last met or to see if the Town will Chuse two or three men to say which of sd Places is the most convenient or to see if the Commity think that knowl where on Stands a Dead Pine Between the two afore sd knowls or to say which of the three Places are most Convenant*
2. *to se if the Town will agree to begin to build thare meeting house this year or make any Preparation tharefor against the year Insuing or do anything Relating thereto.*

This time the results were much more satisfactory. The voters reaffirmed their determination to erect the meeting house in the center of the town and chose the first site suggested in the warrant, in particular the pine knoll on the land of Dr. Cuming (a few rods south of the present location of the Centre School). Incidentally this spot was between twenty and thirty rods southeast of the geographical center of the town before the subtraction of that portion which eventually was ceded to Carlisle at the time of its incorporation.

The deed for the land was dated January 25, 1737, and was signed by Anne Cuming, wife of Dr. Alexander Cuming, a surgeon, who was at that time on a trip abroad. The deed is written in large lettered style and is very easily read, an unusual circumstance as chirography went at that time.

At the same meeting it was further decided to start work as soon as possible and to specify the dimensions. The exact record of this momentous decision is given below.

> *At a General Town meeting of the Inhabitants of the Town of Acton Leagally worned Leut John Heald was Chosen moderator of sd meeting, on the first article Propounded whither the Town will Reconsider thare vote that they will Set thare meeting house in the Centre voted on the afarmative. Propounded whither they will Set thare meeting house on the knowl first mentioned in the Warrant and whare the Pine tree was marked in the Second Division Land of Doctor Cuming voted on the afarmative*
>
> *2 on the second article Propounded what Dementions thay would build it voted they would build it forty six feet long and twenty Eight wide and twenty feet in hight.*

Apparently there was considerable difference of opinion on article two since the meeting adjourned to January 2nd at which time the dimensions were changed to forty six by thirty six by twenty one. It was also decided that all the members of the community be given opportunity to assist at "giting out timber". The committee members, previously listed, were allotted six shillings per day and the other workers five shillings. The sum of seventy five pounds was voted toward setting up the frame.

The first public worship was held in the meeting house in January 1738 even though it was far from ready. In fact not all the pews were installed nine years later when the building was commonly regarded as finished. The actual shell was completed in 1739 but space does not permit a recital of the difficulties encountered. One fact stands out above all others. The starting of a New England town was not a thing to be done nonchalantly after the Indian fashion. The petitioners must needs immediately shoulder the burden of a meeting house and a minister in addition to the erection of their own domiciles and the attendant cultivation of the land. Too much credit cannot be allotted to those who had the courage to meet the challenge.

At the March meeting of 1738 John Cragin was appointed caretaker of the meeting house and became therewith Acton's first janitor, or sexton, as one may choose. At the same meeting it was voted that the last Thursday of March should be a day of fasting and prayer at which time the town should have the advice and assistance of five neighboring clergymen in calling a minister, namely, Mr. Loring of Sudbury,

Mr. Cook of East Sudbury, Mr. Gardner of Stow, Mr. Peabody of Natick, and Mr. Rogers of Littleton. This vote carried with it the added instruction that the selectmen be a committee to manage the affair and also to arrange for the future filling of the pulpit.

The stepping stone of the old first church was in later years set by Mr. Mason Robbins into his wall and lettered with white paint. It still stands there at the lower end of the wall of Mrs. Katherine Condon.

The term "second division" used in connection with the land purchased from Dr. Cuming appears to be a localism of indefinite significance. One could take the position that the original lay-out of old Concord was the first division and that the whole of the later grants comprising Concord Village constituted the second division. A more natural viewpoint, however, is that the grant of 1655 was the first and the one of 1665 the second. If the plausable assumption is made that the first grant was made by moving the westerly side of the old Concord square parallel to itself a sufficient distance to form a rectangle of five thousand acres the extreme boundary of the first division would have been a line at present defined by the piano stool factory, Woodlawn Cemetery, and the junction of Brook Street with the Great Road, thus leaving the Cuming tract more than a half mile inside the second division.

Having disposed of the meeting house for the present we will return to the political affairs of the town

The first regular town meeting was held on March 22, 1735/36. Today we would call it 1736 but at that time March rather than January, was the first month of the year. The official change in the calendar was made in 1752 but the Latin forms of the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th months were never altered. The following town officers were chosen.

1253512

Moderator, John Heald,
Town clerk, Thomas Wheeler,
Constables, Mark White, Simon Hunt,
Selectmen, Joseph Fletcher, John Brooks, Thomas Wheeler,
Assessors, Joseph Fletcher, John Brooks, Thomas Wheeler,
Town Treasurer, John Barker,
Surveyors of Highways, David Procter, Jonathan Billing, Jonathan Knight, Hezekiah Wheeler, Daniel Shepard,
Tythingman, Jonathan Hosmer,
Fence Viewers, Samuel Jones, Nathan Robbins,
Surveyor of Hemp and Flax, John Cragon,
Hogreeves, Benjamin Brabrook, William Cutting, Enoch Cleveland

At this same meeting it was voted to accept the several highways then in existence and newly laid out by the surveyors. The accompanying map gives the approximate location of the essential arteries of traffic as they existed at the time of the incorporation. To attempt a meticulous reproduction is hopeless since locations and relocations, in general inadequately described, appear by the score in the records. It will be noted that a pronounced bend appears in the Great Road in the vicinity of the point of its crossing the present Main Street. This is due to the fact that when first laid out, in order to avoid the long fill through the valley of Nashoba Brook, the highway turned abruptly to follow the present Davis Road to a point just beyond the Bellows Farm, then, turning to the left, crossed the brook by means of a ford, and joined the present Great Road at the top of the hill. The present so-called Wampus Ave. (although never so named officially) together with the cart path still discernable, leading down to the brook, represent the vestiges of the original highway. The road was straightened in 1797.

One further comment is apropos concerning the map. Since no one can today define exactly the waterways and ponds as they then existed the map shows them as of the geological survey of 1943. Certainly Nagog, the level of which was raised several feet by the erection of the dam in the middle of the nineteenth century, was radically altered in contour.

An old newspaper clipping cites a legend to the effect that Sinking Pond was so named because a hill suddenly sank and formed the isolated but picturesque sheet of water existent today. The story is highly apocryphal since no known geologic phenomenon likely to occur in New England since the appearance of humans on this planet could produce any such result.

Once the questions relating to the position and size of the meeting house had been settled other decisions were made with reasonable dispatch. On September 15, 1736 it was voted to frame and raise the building before winter and John Heald, Thomas Wheeler and Simon Hunt were chosen as the committee to superintend the project. At the same time it was decided to do nothing about preaching the ensuing winter. Two months later a vote was passed that the siding, doors, windows, pulpit and floor were to be finished a year hence, namely November 1737.

On May 30, 1737 it was voted to underpin the meeting house by working each man a day. Apparently then as now not all were overzealous when it came to actual physical labor, whether for the benefit of God or their individual souls, since the vote carried with it the stipulation that delinquents were to be forced to work at the highways and were to put in one day extra over and above what their share

would have been. At the same meeting it was voted "to pint ye underpining of ye meeting house and at same time to let out sd work to Jonathan Billings to do for ye sum of £2-10-00 which work he, sd Billings, Ingaged to do it Spedely & do It wel". Throughout the year 1737 various sums were raised to pay Jonathan Billings, Joseph Fletcher, and Joseph Barnes for stone work, carpentering and glazing.

While these matters were maturing for the good of the citizenry the fact was not overlooked that man is mortal and must needs have a proper resting place after death. The burying ground then in use near Deacon Heald's, at the northeastern end of town, was too small and too remote for general use by the envisioned community. In consequence the older part of what is now Woodlawn Cemetery, was purchased on February 9, 1737 from Nathan Robbins for the sum of one pound.[1]

In May of 1738 the town voted to invite Mr. John Swift of Framingham to settle in Acton as minister. In addition he was voted a settlement or bonus of two hundred and fifty pounds for accepting the charge plus an annual salary of one hundred and fifty pounds payable semi-annually in Massachusetts bills, which at that time was equivalent to one hundred seventeen pounds settlement and seventy pounds salary. A committee consisting of John Heald, Samuel Wheeler, Joseph Fletcher, John Brooks, Simon Hunt and Ammiruhammah Faulkner was chosen to meet with Mr. Swift and come to an agreement with him.

Since it may be of interest to some readers the contract between Rev. John Swift and the town of Acton is herewith given in detail.

> *"Whare-as the Town of Acton at a Town Meeting Duly warned May* 19, 1738, *did invite ye Rev. John Swift into ye work of ye ministry among them, and did all so pass a vote to give him two hundred and fifty pounds towards a settlement, and a hundred and fifty Pounds Sallary yearly and since, at a town meeting October ye* 10*th,* 1738, *did vote that said Sallary should be kept up to ye value of it and paid in every half years End yearly, and did also chuse John Heald, Joseph Fletcher, John Brooks, Samuel Wheeler and Simon Hunt as a Committ to contract with the Said Mr. Swift about ye said Sallary, the contract and agreement between said Mr. Swift and said Committ is as follows:*
>
> 1*st. That said sallary shall be paid According to ye ould tenure of the Massachusetts Bills or in an equivalency of such bills of pr. cent or lawful currency as shall pass from time to time.*

[1] See Fletcher p. 246.

2d. That the value of said sallary be kept up from time to time according as when it was voted on May afore according to ye prise of the necessary provisions of life.
3d. That the payment of said salary continue so long as said Mr. Swift shall continue in ye work of ye ministry in said Acton and in witness her of said Mr. Swift and said Committe have hereunto set their hands this 30th day of October A.D., 1738. *John Swift, John Heald, Joseph Fletcher, Amme Faulkner, Simon Hunt, John Brooks.*

Ordered on this book of Records,
Attest Simon Hunt, Town Clerk.

Aside from the dignity and uniqueness of the document it is interesting to note that the clerk inadvertantly omitted in the preamble the name of Ammiruhammah Faulkner when listing the committee. That long Biblical name was a monstrous hurdle for more than one recorder, particularly in an age when schooling was brief and the rules of spelling were well nigh non-existent. As a matter of fact the minutes of the town meeting of the May previous give the name as Ammiruhami and in the document just cited the clerk felt inclined to abbreviate it to Amme.. This latter form has something to be said for it.

The contract was faithfully kept by the people of Acton and the pastorate of Mr. Swift continued until he succumbed at the age of sixty two to small pox on November 7, 1775, after having served for thirty seven years lacking one day.

He was ordained on the eighth of November, 1738. No particulars of the ordination appear in either the town or church records other than the simple notation that "the Council had entertainment at the home of Mr. Joseph Fletcher."

Mr. Swift was the only son of the Rev. John Swift of Framingham. He was born there in 1713, was graduated from Harvard College in 1733 and at the time of his ordination was twenty five years of age. According to Fletcher he was little above the common height, rather slender, with manners and address agreeable and pleasant. He was economical in the management of his affairs, but kind to the poor and a good neighbor. He was opposed to excess and extravagance of every kind and the promotion of peace and good feeling was his constant care. He had some singularities of character but led an exemplary life and retained the respect and affection of his people throughout his entire ministry. His preaching was practical, plain, and serious, though it was said he had occasionally some unusual expressions in the pulpit which were rather amusing.

As was the custom of many clergymen of his day, he received young men into his family for instruction in the studies preparatory

to college. In one year five such were presented by him at Cambridge and all passed the examination and were admitted. There are a few samples of his handwriting extant and these seem to indicate an ease in the use of Latin. This is particularly true as to his church records but they are so abbreviated and interspersed with a kind of personal shorthand as to make the significance dubious in places. The volume is a very small one, without caption or heading and there is nothing to indicate what the contents are to be. It is obvious that he regarded the document as merely a memorandum for his personal convenience. In one place he remarks," I regret that I did not at the beginning of my ministry procure a larger book, and keep a more particular and extensive record. I hope my successor will profit by this hint".

Some other interesting items are typical. Under date of June 4, 1739 appears the following: "After blessing was pronounced I desired the church to tarry, and asked their minds concerning the remainder of the elements after communion and they voted, "I should have 'em". Somewhat later (Sept. 11, 1744, he says, "I made a speech to the church thus, 'Brethren, I doubt not but that you have taken notice of the long absence of brother Mark White, Jr. from the ordinances of God in this place. If you request it of him to give us the reasons of his absence some time hence, I desire you would manifest it by an uplifted hand. Whereupon there was an affirmative vote."[1]

Another entry in the records of about the same period causes one to wonder if there be any connection. In the case of an erring brother we find the following comment, "They desired Bro. W. seriously to consider his reasons offered, that he might discover ye insufficiency of 'em and give ye ch. sufficient satisfaction and return to his duty."

It was the custom to labor at length with the erring and try to impress upon them the magnitude of their sins. Many times the effort was a success but now and again a recalcitrant sinner seemed bent on damnation. Such was the case of Titus Laws who, remaining completely immovable after five years of exhoratation was suspended and allowed to go his own way.

The faithful parson apparently took no offense at slavery. In the Goodnow Library in Sudbury is a bill of sale given by him on November 2, 1745 for "a Neagrow man Servant named Frank Benson of about twenty three years old" to Josiah Richardson of Sudbury.

Rev. Swift lived to see the opening of the Revolution. Davis's company marched by his door on the way to Concord. Thomas

[1] Subsequently the young man, then twenty-eight, became a deacon.

Thorpe, one of the Minute Men,[1] in a deposition made before the selectmen and a committee of the town in 1835, asserted that as the company passed the minister's house[2] his son, Dr. John Swift, seeing that Thorp had no cartridge box, gave him one having on the outside a piece of cloth in the shape of a heart.

This brief survey of the life of Rev. Swift will provide a glimpse of the type of man the town chose to direct its religious life. We must, however, turn our attention back to the years when the good minister took up his charge.

From time to time the list of town officers was augmented as seemed necessary. Some of these were decidedly obscure. On March 5, 1739, for instance, Mark White, then aged twenty three, was elected to the office of "Graninrowman", whatever that may mean. Thus far inquiry among authorities on New England town government and antiquarians has provided no explanation. One could guess that it has something to do with grain but there the trail ends.

Mark White was the great-great grandfather of Mr. Chester Robbins[3] and operated the old post road public house then known locally as White's Tavern. In its hey-day it was a favorite stopping place on the Great Road. When Acton was incorporated Mark White was forty six and was engaged in a very popular occupation. Eastern Massachusetts was full of taverns. Crowell in his history of Stow asserts that at one time that town had sixteen. Daniel, the son of Mark, took over in due course and was succeeded in turn by Jonas Putney, Mr. Robbins' grandfather.

With the coming of the railroads and the cessation of the stage coach traffic the tavern ceased to function with its former vigor but continued on during the latter part of the nineteenth centruy under the regime of Ephraim Forbush and William Hartwell. With the era of the automobile and universal vacations Mr. Robbins, in 1899, completely altered the building and grounds and conducted a high class resort hotel until the time of his retirement in 1934 and his entrance into the insurance business, without however, changing his office or his abode.

Deacon John White, the son of Daniel, maintained during his lifetime an active store nearby, on a site just between the present resi-

[1] Thomas Thorp, the last surviving member of Davis's company, was taken from an almshouse and put to live with an Acton family. In his adult years he resided on or near the site of the house now occupied by Mr. Carl Schontag. He died on October 12, 1849 at the age of ninety three.

[2] Rev. Swift lived in a house, later burned, on the site of the present residence of Mr. Liebfried. Former owners were Josiah Noyes, David Barnard, Joash Keyes, Eliab Grimes, Jona Teele, Deacon W. W. Davis and James B. Tuttle.

[3] Mark White was also the ancestor of Mrs. Florence White Durkee and her brothers Professor Leonard Dupee White and Richard Peregrine White, resident in Washington as executive secretary of the National Nurserymen's Association.

dence of Mrs. Bertha White and the one formerly occupied by her father Job W. Dupee.

In 1740 the office of sealer of weights and measures was created and Mark White was elected to the position. Acton was in no mood, however, to rush into needless expense, and so, it made the office vacuous by refusing to vote the requisite funds to purchase standard weights and measures.

It would be natural to expect that as soon as the town became well organized the matter of schooling would present itself. Furthermore it might be expected that, as in the case of the location of the meeting house, there would emerge decided differences of opinion. Some would feel that despite the cost a common schooling was imperative.

Opposed to these would be two groups, those who while admitting the necessity, desired to delay action until the more immediate burden of the cost of the meeting house had been removed, and those who due to miserliness, shiftlessness, or total lack of civic interest, were opposed to taxes for any purpose whatever.

In any event the battle waged for several years with public opinion about equally divided. At the annual March meeting of 1740 there appeared in the town warrant an article to see if the town would erect schools for "Reading and Righting". This is the first recorded action respecting the schools. The motion did not prevail but the more progressive citizens were tenacious individuals in consequence of which an affirmative vote was passed on May 2, 1741 with respect to an article, "to se If ye town woold agree to have Reading, riteing and moveing school for six months or do anything Relating to that affare". This certainly looked like a forward step but somehow the opposition corralled sufficient votes to prevent the raising of any money for the project and furthermore scuttled a similar proposition at the March meeting of 1742.

The term "moving school" may need some clarification. From the outset it had been deemed too expensive to build school houses. The opposition to that had been too strong for any argument. Consequently certain of the voters had advocated holding the school in private homes for several weeks consecutively, first in one part of the town and then in another. Eventually this was done but the time was not yet.

Along with other matters the growing town had need to establish its boundary lines. Usually this was done by joint committees from the adjacent towns who met at a convenient date, perambulated the line, and agreed as to its proper location. For the most part these meetings were harmonious and the business was completed with dis-

patch but with respect to Stow there were definite exceptions.[1] Hence we find the following recorded as of April 30, 1741.

It appears that Amos Brown and William Farr of Stow met John Brooks and Simon Hunt of Acton to walk the bounds. In the inimitable style of Simon Hunt we are informed that they, "Began at ye southeasterly mark near ye Rever being a white oak in a wall & a large maple & a white oak by a dead oak". During the day a violent controversey arose over the corner and Hunt goes on to say:

> *"on the side of a Large Hill whare there is Leverit remarks made on trees near by it, it being the Corner of Acton and Leverit lines Demolished which was supposed to be done by Stow people and now it was Erected and renewed as followeth viz most of ye Stoon being removed it was disputed whether it was ye Corner or not Stow people being very Contravary about it it was agreed upon by Each party that if it Could Appear by Evidence Sufficiently to be ye Antiant Bound or Corner to renew ye same. Cor'l John Flint Esq & Cor'l James Minot Esq being present with many Concord Stow and Acton people It was Desired If thair was any parson present that had any Knowledge of ye Corner to manifest it and Lt Joseph Wright, Wm. Wheeler & Stephen Hosmer, all of Concord, and Abraham Whitney of Stow had ye following owth administered to them by Coll Flint to this Effect that ye Evidence that they should give in Relaiting to that corner or any other mark to be parambualted and in answering all such Questions yt Should be asked by Each party concerned to be ye truth ye whool truth & nothing but ye truth. Whoose Evidence agreed and was full to ye purpose allso a coppy of ye return of ye Gineral Courts Commtt was (next word undecipherable) to Excepttence & ye Bound Renewed".*

The full import of the foregoing will be obscure to the uninitiated without some explanation. The corner in dispute was undoubtedly the western extremity of Acton where the three towns of Acton, Stow and Boxborough have a common point. At the time of the controversy a large portion of what is now Boxborough belonged to Stow so that Acton formed a right angle jutting into Stow. Apparently certain Stowites took exception to this and had made bold to destroy the markers and tree blazes set up by order of Governor

[1] Stow was originally composed of a tract bounded by Sudbury, Concord, Groton, Lancaster, Marlboro, and the Indian Plantation of Nashoba. The Indians called it Pompasetticutt. In 1666 a part of this area was formally laid out to Major Eleazer Usher; and a little later some five hundred acres to Daniel Gookin, and one hundred fifty acres to Richard Heldredge. The town was incorporated 1683. According to Crowell the Gookin tract lay in the Heathen (Heath Hen) Meadow area.

Leverett (this is what Simon Hunt means when he mentions "Leverit remarks"). These Leverett marks were almost certainly corroboratory to the lines and corners of the original Beers and Noyes survey and likewise the ones used by Stephen Hosmer in his survey of Concord Village in 1730. It is to be noted that among the considerable group that apparently went along on this memorable perambulation was Stephen Hosmer and other men of Concord. They doubtless were all aware of the original bounds of Concord Village and were witnesses for Acton in the controversey. It appears that they recommended the reinstatement of the Leverett boundary lines.

In the excitement of building the meeting house, settling boundaries, and deciding upon school matters the question of town finances had been allowed to lapse to the extent that in 1743, at the request of certain of the citizens, an accounting was demanded. The detailed wording of the vote taken and the resultant action are of interest as examples of simplicity and economy in government.

> *March* 7, 1743, "*Voted to here ye Request of Samuel prescott & others as follows first to se if the town will Chuse a Commett to Recen with the present town Treasurer & all those that have sarved as town treasurers in said town since ye year* 1735 *to Se what of the towns money Is yeat in there hands & to se if the town will Chuse a Commett to call all those that ware selectmen & assessors of the said town of Acton for and since sd year* 1735 *to an account to se how they have Disposed of the towns money and to Reckon & Adjust accounts with them Relaiting to the same and make return at the next town meeting.*"

Phineas Osgood, Joseph Berry, and John Davis were chosen as the committee. They met with the interested parties on the following May 13th and paid to Jonathan Billings 77 pounds 8 shillings nine pence, to Dr. Joseph Fletcher 17 pounds 2 shillings 1 pence, to Mark White 12 pounds 7 shillings 5 pence, and for glazing the meeting house 42 pounds. From this it appears that these gentlemen had advanced money from their personal funds to meet the town obligations upon occasion.

At this time (December 9, 1743) the matter of the support of the schools again arose and a vote was passed to raise eighteen pounds (old tenor) for the support of the same. Simultaneously it was voted that the assessors (Samuel Davis, John Cragin, Samuel Jones) be a committee to divide the town into three school districts. This is the first positive action taken by the town on the school question. The voting of specific funds would indicate that at last the townspeople really meant business. Likewise the committee named, although acting in double capacity, may well be called Acton's first school

committee, even though no authority in the matter of school organization was specifically delegated to it. As a matter of fact we find that a year later twenty pounds was voted which same was to be allocated among the parts of the town by the selectmen.

Concurrently with the various projects that have been mentioned there was considerable action in the matter of highways. The town records bristle with items concerning roads laid out or proposed and tell an interesting story of political backing and filling in the attempt on the part of one party or another to get special access to church, store, or desirable farm land or water privileges. The details are far too intricate to be considered here (by far the best reference on this point is the exceptionally well excuted map of the old town ways and houses drawn in 1890 by former town clerk Horace F. Tuttle, which hangs in the Acton Memorial Library) but now and then a typical case is cited which shows the tone of the community mind. At the March meeting of 1744 there appeared in the warrant an article having for its objective the building of a bridge over the "Great Brook" near the house of Nathan Robbins in order to ease the difficulties of one Hugh Foster. Whatever the nature of Mr. Foster's tribulations, either real or imaginary, the town did not see fit to give him relief since the article was dismissed. This action undoubtedly referred to a bridge approximately at the site of the present stone one near the baseball field in South Acton. On the modern geological survey map the stream is called Fort Pond Brook. On the older maps it is designated as Fort Pond Brook or as Law's Great Brook. Among Acton residents the strange custom persists of using the term Fort Pond Brook for that portion above South Acton whereas lower down, in the area nearer to the Concord line where it flows through the old Laws farms, it is frequently identified as Law's Brook. Incidentally there is no Acton record as to when Fort Pond was so named or why but in any event we do find mention of Fort Pond Brook in connection with perambulation of the bounds in 1744. Mr. Albert Conant, an Acton native, successful business man in Littleton, and a careful student of its lore, remarks in a historical paper of visiting as a boy the old cellar hole which was presumed to be part of the ancient Indian fort from which the adjacent pond took its name.

Another bit of local history and geography is brought to mind by an article in the warrant of 1750 "to see if the town will discontinue a bit of way that leads from Daniel Shepards beginning at a place commonly called Rocky Guzzle to a pitch pine upon the high land towards the meeting house". To a majority of the present Acton residents the term "Rocky Guzzle" is without any particular import but to earlier residents it had a weighty and sombre connotation. Geo-

graphically it is the ravine which lies between the northern boundary of old Woodlawn Cemetery and the level ground upon which the chapel now stands. The last vestiges of the road in question can still be seen in the form of an almost obscure cart path leading off to the right of the present highway as one goes down the hill toward the cemetery.

Where the name "Rocky Guzzle" originated is a mystery since there is hardly a place in Acton that is less rocky and there is nothing but the tiniest rill to do any guzzling or gurgling. In its present posture, with the landscaping that has been done in the last twenty years, there is nothing ominous about the little glen, but in former days, when the whole vale lay in the perpetual umbra of virgin pines and hemlock, the locality was avoided by the timid after the onset of dusk not only because of the silence and gloom and the nearby presence of the army of the dead but because of the disquieting legends associated with it. The choicest of these has to do with the Brooks Tavern and the erection of the second meeting house and will be related in its proper setting.

But we must cease this digression and return to the study of the record. As has already been made clear the building of the meeting house was a tedious business. Winter weather conditions forced the completion of the exterior but once that was accomplished progress slowed up appreciably. In the beginning there were sixteen pews installed, located on the main floor and adjacent to the side walls. In the center, on each side of the broad aisle, were constructed what were known as body seats. The remaining space, namely that under and above the gallery stairs, was filled in piecemeal over a lapse of several years. In fact the records show that periodically auctions were held in the endeavor to make disposition of it provided the bidder was a respected and responsible citizen. At certain auctions the town showed no compunction whatever about voting aye on one case and nay on another in the space of a few minutes. The body seats and those in the gallery were allocated to those who because of poverty or other cause were not proprietors of a pew and the occupants were arranged by sex with the men on the right and the women on the left of the pulpit. This was a custom of long standing followed presumably in the interests of morality and decorum. It was based on the debatable notion that if the young lads and lassies were isolated by a few feet their thoughts would more easily dwell on God and their souls. Only the owners of pews, namely men of stature and sobriety who were family heads, were allowed to sit with a wife and/or other female relatives.

Pew owners were accorded other unusual prorogatives, and that by town action, which, however little they may have effected the

sensibilities of the citizenry, certainly left an imprint upon the architecture of the meeting house. In 1744, for instance, Josiah Piper and Daniel Shepard were given permission to cut a window between their pews and another at the back of the Shepard pew with the proviso that they keep said windows in repair. It is because of this action that drawings of the old first meeting house show small windows here and there which are completely out of line with the standard larger ones.

To insure as much justice as possible in the assignment of the pews it was the practice for the town to choose a committee to "seat the meeting house". Experience had made it plain that only by such a procedure could haggling and confusion be minimized. Furthermore, only thus could the aged and infirm be assured of a certain and comfortable seat. In spite of this attempt at democracy, however, the things of this mortal world were not wholly overlooked since we find record of where a certain committee was instructed to be "governed by age and the amount of taxes paid the preceding three years". Special instructions were also issued relative to Negroes who were to have exclusive use of the "hind seat in the gallery".

The first seating committee was elected at a special town meeting held on September 4, 1744 and the personnel consisted of John Davis, Jr., Jonathan Billing, John Craigin, and Jonathan Hosmer. There is no record of how successful this group was in the execution of this touchy assignment but at least it was not conspicuously unsuccessful since otherwise the report would have been soundly denounced and voted down as was the case in certain instances of later date.

As new arrivals moved into town pews were assigned to them by the selectmen who were constituted a special committee for that purpose by a vote of the town in March 1748. One of these new residents appears to have been Timothy Farrar, who applied for the pew space under the women's stairs but was denied permission for unspecified reasons.

In the tenth year after the founding of Acton there occurred an event which at the time appeared routine but which was to loom large in the town's eventual story. On February 23, 1745 there was born to Ezekiel Davis and his wife Mary Gibson (of Stow) a son Isaac who was destined thirty years later to be the first commissioned officer to sacrifice his life in the War of the Revolution. Ezekiel Davis had married almost exactly a year previously and lived in the part of town where the village of West Acton subsequently came into being. The house, standing today on Arlington Street, has been in continuous use as a dwelling ever since, the owners being Elias Chaffin, Jona. B. Davis, and George Hagar among others. The

present occupant is Mrs. Ethel Goding who rents a portion of it to the Richard Corrigan family.

In due course the interest in the school situation progressed to the point where larger sums were being provided and the teachers were paid a salary. In 1749 we find a notation by the selectmen as having paid Deacon John Heald the sum of five pounds for services as schoolmaster for the years 1746 and 1747. They were two years in arrears but Acton at that time had not attained to such things as fiscal years, finance committees, auditors, and all the complex officialdom of the present era. If any instruction was given gratis previous to 1746 there is no record of it so Deacon Heald may be regarded as Acton's first bonafide schoolmaster as well as its first selectman and deacon. The next two appear to be Phineas Osgood and Josiah Hayward who received ten pounds each in March of 1748.

In May of the same year Acton really went all out in the matter of school support by voting the unheard of sum of sixty pounds, more than three times the amount deemed necessary only six years previously. A brief summary of the payments recorded for the next several years is given below:

Jonathan Hosmer	£17-00-00	Feb. 22, 1749
Josiah Hayward	2-00-00	Feb. 22, 1749
William Farr	8-10-00	Feb. 22, 1749
Timothy Brooks	8-10-00	Feb. 22, 1749
John Craigin	2-04-06	Mar. 4, 1751
John Meriam	2-04-06	Mar. 4, 1751
Josiah Hayward	2-04-06	Mar. 4, 1751
William Farr	2-06-09	May 7, 1751
Ephraim Smith	1-06-08	Nov. 28, 1751
Francis Eveleth	2-00-00	Mar. 2, 1752
John Craigin	2-00-00	Mar. 2, 1752
William Farr	3-02-03	Mar. 27, 1752
John Craigin	1-06-08	Mar. 27, 1752
Josiah Hayward	2-00-00	April 7, 1752
Francis Eveleth	4-00-00	May 12, 1753

Francis Eveleth cited above, was doubtless the native of Stow, mentioned in Crowell's history of that town (page 91) as having been "one of the famous teachers of the past".

Additional data relative to payment of school teachers will be found in Appendix V.

HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF ACTON

PART III

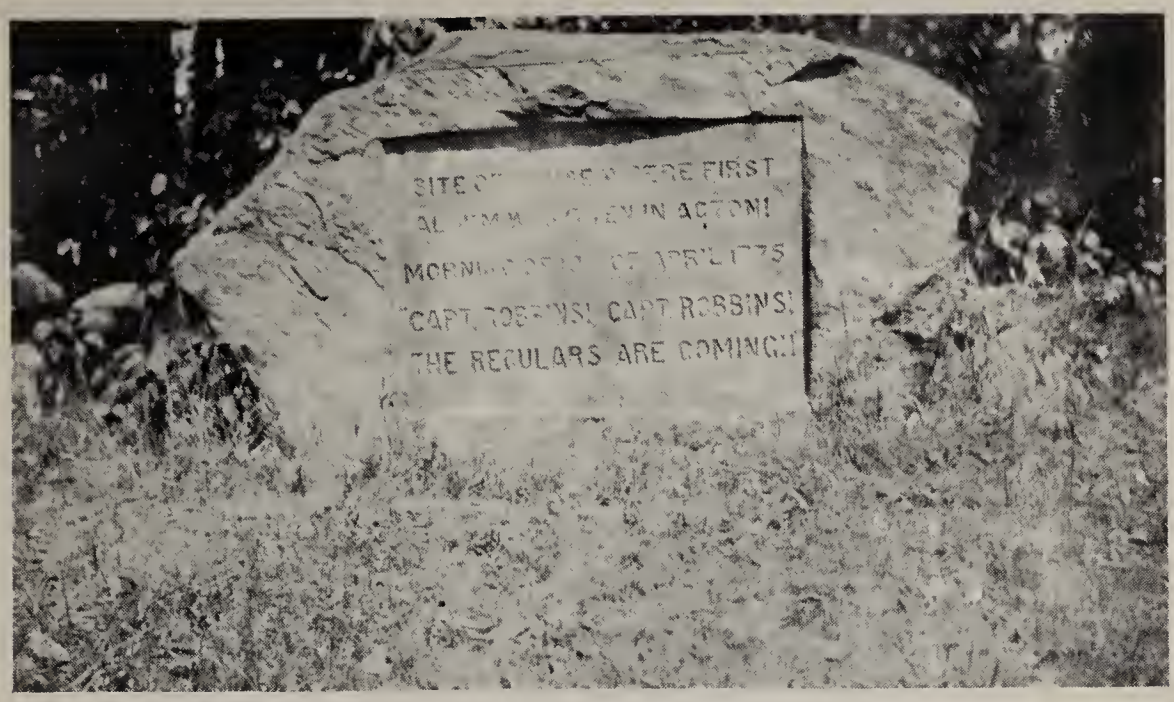
1750 - 1800

Ever since the incorporation of the town it had been the custom to permit sheep and swine to run at large and forage for their food. As a matter of fact the origin of the town common or "common ground" stemmed from the fact that in earlier times it provided a place where the live stock could feed while under constant observation. Each year an article in the warrant bore upon the point. At the March meeting of 1732 sheep were denied the privilege for the first time while hogs were allowed to continue to roam. The reason for this discrimmination is not too clear when viewed from the perspective of more than two centuries but at least it does illuminate one facet of a growing civic consciousness, even though it was to be a long time before a similar restriction was to be put on swine. The hogreeves were to be busy rounding up the stray pigs and coaxing them into the local pound for decades yet to come.[1]

It has already been pointed out that in numerous cases the town had seen fit at diverse times to order the constables to warn certain undesirable persons out of town. Up to 1753 however, there is no record of the specific procedure to be followed in the case of the insane or unfortunates of other sorts. At the March meeting of the above year there appeared in the warrant an article, "To se if town will Cast Lydia R..... on those that Brought her into town and Likewise pass any vote Relating to said Lydia R..... that may be Thought proper when met". The action on this matter resulted in the choice of Nathan Robbins, Jonathan Parlin, John Davis, Jr., Capt. Davies, and Lt. Billing as a committee to examine into the matter.

No record appears as to subsequent action until 1759 at which time six shillings was voted as payment to Mrs. John Craigin for service as a midwife at the confinement of Margaret L. ..... and Lydia R..... From this it would appear that in 1753 Lydia R..... was an immature girl who had been brought into the community and possibly abandoned by those upon whom she depended for support but in any event the above mentioned committee must have made some arrangement whereby she remained for six years. There is no way to know today whether she was a partially irresponsible subnormal or an alert siren of easy virtue. As the mothers of illegitimate

[1] As a matter of casual information it may interest the reader to learn that Ralph Waldo Emerson, in addition to his literary interests, his labors in connection with the Concord Athenaeum, and diverse other civic activities, once filled the office of hogreeve.



ROBBINS ALARM STONE



Birthplace of Capt. Isaac Davis, West Acton, Mass.



BROOKS HOUSE, PARSONAGE, NEW FIRE HOUSE, DAVIS MONUMENT

children these two women are of small import on the scroll of history but the reaction of the town is quite another matter. Bastardy was no uncommon thing among our forebears regardless of their marathon sermons and exalted rules of conduct. Authoritative writers in the field of sociology[1] cite numerous sources that make it clear that carnality to a degree wholly contrary to the traditional picture of Puritanism was the rule rather than the exception. Furthermore[2] one record shows that in a town near to Acton that of two hundred persons taking the baptismal covenant there in a fourteen year period no less than sixty confessed to fornication before marriage. In the present no such admission would be made or expected, but at that time the fear of infant damnation was a compelling stimulus to young married persons to make shameful public confession. Apparently human nature of yore was characteristically human.

The point here to be made is that when in February of 1760 the town voted to pay certain sums to Oliver Wheeler and Amos Lamson for the support of Lydia R..... and her child it showed a laudable turn of mind for those days. In an earlier era the unfortunate woman might well have been thrown into jail or subjected to humiliating mental or even corporal punishment. The whole plot of Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* hinged directly upon this point.

On June 7, 1754 John Craigin, Daniel Fletcher and Jonathan Hosmer of Acton met Abishai Brown and David Parlin of Concord and renewed the old bounds between the two towns. The record states specifically that this was the continuation of a project begun on April 16th and that the party completed its work at the Billerica line at the point commonly called Berry Corner.[3]

When Rev. John Swift was selected in 1738 as Acton's minister it was agreed that his salary should fluctuate in relation to the value of the necessaries of life. Accordingly on May 21, 1754 the time had come to make an adjustment and in consequence the town voted, "To chuse a committee to make an agreement with Rev. Swift upon the common prices of the necessaries of life in this and the neighboring towns at the time of his settlement and have the same transmitted to the Town Records to be conformed unto in computing and adjusting Swifts sallary from time to time".

The committee chosen consisted of the selectmen plus Mr. Faulkner, Josiah Hayward, Deacon John Brooks and John Davis, Jr. On the following November fifteenth they submitted the list below as embracing what in their opinion was needed to supply the parson's family for a year:

[1] Arthur W. Calhoun; *A Social History of the American Family*, vol. 1, p. 132.
[2] *ibid.* (re town of Groton) p. 133.
[3] At this time the town of Carlisle did not exist.

30	bush.	Indian Corn	at	0-6-0
20	"	Rye	"	0-10-0
500	lbs.	Pork	"	0-0-8
300	"	Beef	"	0-0-5
25	"	Sheep Wool	"	0-3-6
15	"	Cotton Wool	"	0-4-6
50	"	Flax	"	0-1-3
56	"	Sugar	"	0-1-4
20	gal.	Rum	"	0-8-0
80	lbs.	Butter	"	0-1-4
2		Hats	"	3-0-0
10	prs.	Shoes	"	0-15-0

This list appears in the town records and below, in the handwriting of the minister, obviously written in the presence of the committee, is the following:

"These may certify that I the Subscriber am content with the above amounts of the price of the Necessarys of Life at ye time of my Settlement in the Town of Acton, witness my hand the date above

John Swift

ordered on this book of records"

Attest Jonathan Hosmer, Town Clerk.

Evidently it was thought desirable in those days that the good clergyman should not only be filled with the spirit of the Lord but should also be fortified with the lesser incentives to the amount of approximately a half pint per day. If by chance it happened to be his habit to forego the first three days of the week and save up for the Sabbath there is small wonder that two long and eloquent sermons might result.

At about this time notations begin to appear in the record concerning the residents of what is now Carlisle. On April 24, 1755, for instance, Jonathan Hosmer, Samuel Davis, and Daniel Fletcher, selectmen of Acton, met with John Hartwell, John Green, and Jona Puffer, selectmen of Carlisle and agreed that Mr. John Davis should pay half of his taxes in each town. The modern reader would infer from the above that Carlisle was already an incorporated town but such is not the case. The actual status of affairs is of sufficient interest to be explained in detail.

In 1754 the inhabitants of the area under consideration were, at their own request, incorporated as a district of Concord. For two years they tried in vain to settle on a location for their meeting house. During this period we find the selectmen of Acton and Carlisle perambulating the common boundary on April 19, 1756 with Berry Corner mentioned as an important landmark in the day's work.

Just two months later, on June 24th, eleven petitioners[1] sought relief and asked that the district be returned to the town of Concord. On the following July 14th a committee was chosen to present the above views to the General Court with the following residents voting in the negative, Jonathan Blood, David Blood, Zaccheus Green, John Green, Jr., John Hartwell, David Parlin, Joseph Parlin, James Russell, James Russell, Jr., Leonard Spaulding, Joseph Taylor, Nathaniel Taylor, Nathaniel Taylor, Jr., Timothy Wilkins.

Eventually, on January 11, 1757, the General Court passed the act whereby the district, henceforth known as Old Carlisle, was set back to the town of Concord.

In spite of this action the leaven continued to be active in the hearts and minds of some, and in 1760 a meeting house was started in view of the day when corporate separation might be achieved. Not only this, but on two occasions sufficient action was evinced to make it necessary for Acton to delegate committees to appear before the General Court to show reason why no part of the town should be set off to form another town. In the first instance John Davis, Jr. and Francis Faulkner were appointed at a town meeting held on May 22, 1760 and in the second Capt. Daniel Fletcher, Jonathan Billing and Josiah Hayward were likewise delegated on March 31, 1762 with the further instruction that they were to jointly visit the locality in question with a committee of the General Court to view the circumstances of the petitioners, should the court so desire.

Finally, on April 28, 1780, an act was passed setting off certain extreme portions of Concord, Acton, Chelmsford, Billerica, and the Blood Farms and incorporating them as a district of Acton by the name of Carlisle. This act provided that "one sixth of the expense of the maintenance of the North Bridge in Concord be paid until another bridge be built by Carlisle". In addition all the poor in the district were to be supported therein.

Moreover the farms of Thomas Brown, Nathan Buttrick, Oliver Brown, Samuel Kirby, John Blood, and Willard Blood of Concord, living within the area designated, were to continue to belong to Concord unless they within one year notified the secretary of the province to the contrary. This latitude was allowed them in view of the fact that these families had not petitioned for the act, and agreeably to the vote passed at the dissolution of Old Carlisle, they were exempted from its operation. An act was passed September 12, 1780 annexing Josiah Blood to Concord and one in March of 1783 annexing David Parker to Chelmsford.

In 1783 Carlisle completed its meeting house but remained a district of Acton until June of 1804 at which time it was deemed

[1] Shattuck p. 321.

expedient to split off as a separate town. Jonathan Heald was chosen to present the matter to the General Court. On February 18, 1805 Carlisle was granted its act of incorporation. The population at that date is not known but it can be approximated from the census of 1800 and 1810 which give 634 and 675 respectively. These figures are of passing interest in view of the fact that as of now, nearly a century and a half later, the population stands at 876.

During the period while Carlisle was a district of Acton the communities upon two occasions shared their representative in the General Court, namely in 1790 when Deacon Ephraim Robbins served in the double capacity and again in 1803 when Asa Parlin did likewise.

From the outset Acton had built mills to saw its lumber and grind its grain and had smelted its own iron. With a growing population and an increased sense of well-being it had also depended less and less upon the elder communities for the various craft products. As a case in point the cooper's trade had reached such a stage by 1757 that the town saw fit to create the office of "culler of staves". Mark White was the first incumbent and was presumably charged with the duty of seeing to it that the staves that went into the hogsheads, barrels, puncheons, pails and churns locally produced were of satisfactory grade. Acton was a beehive of small industry for well over a century[1] and a goodly number of the old houses have ells or other portions that at one time housed coopers, bootmakers, metalsmiths or cordwainers.

While these developments were taking place the long festering irritation between England and France relative to their American colonies was coming to a head. Both nations, for more than a century, had been struggling for the prize of supremacy. The British emigration policy, coupled with a more benign climate, had augmented the numbers and increased the importance of the southern colonies far beyond the possibilities of the feebler settlements in the far north. Consequently, while the seaboard area contained upwards of a million souls, the banks of the St. Lawrence and the valley of the Mississippi were peopled by less than a hundred thousand persons who claimed France as their native land and who were envious and suspicious of the prosperity of their neighbors.

The peace of Aix la Chapelle (1748) was a truce rather than a league; and the very vagueness of its terms was pregnant with further discord. France, on the one hand, was reluctant to relinquish any of the territory trod by her missionaries and subject to her flag while England, on the other hand, dreading the presence of France and the

[1] By 1821 between fifteen and twenty thousand barrels per year were being made. There were also at this time 3 grist mills, 2 carding machines, 2 fulling mills, and four saw mills.

influence of the Jesuits upon the warlike Indians, was anxious for the time when all of North America would be under her sway. France, had it not been for her feebleness and the paucity of her population in the new world, would have eagerly driven the British from the whole continent. Since this result was quite hopeless she could only exert herself to fortify the strongholds she already held and erect others along the disputed boundary line. Hence a chain of posts was proposed connecting the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi. It was a policy long cherished which she now set out seriously to consummate.

The natural result of this conflict of objectives led to the so called French and Indian War (1753-1763). The record of Acton's participation in it is extremely meagre. Fletcher[1] asserts that tradition states that Capt. Gershom Davis led a company in 1759 and just at the end Capt. J. Robbins took out another. In addition Major Daniel Fletcher was captain of a company of infantry in a regiment raised by Massachusetts Bay for service against Canada in which expedition he was wounded and taken prisoner. Acton vital statistics list three in such a manner as to make it clear that they died in the service, namely, James Brabrook (May 8, 1756, at Ft. Larance, N. S.), Samuel Brabrook (July 14, 1756, on Rainford Island) and Benjamin Allen (Oct. 14, 1758, "in His Majesty's Service").

One event during the war may have had its minor impact upon Acton namely, the removal of the Acadians from Nova Scotia in September of 1755, so sympathetically portrayed in Longfellow's *Evangeline*. Some nineteen hundred and more of these pathetic and harmless folk were needlessly scattered over the face of the earth to such distant places as Florida, the mouth of the Mississippi, and the Falkland Islands. Approximately eleven hundred were literally dumped on the wharves at Boston just at the beginning of winter. No organized arrangements had been made for their care but fortunately toleration had grown a bit since the days of the witchcraft scare and so, even though there were obsolete laws on the books prohibiting the admittance of Papists, certain families took in the refugees as a matter of Christian duty. Whether or not any of these unfortunates came to Acton is not a matter of town record but both Westford and Littleton had dealings with the General Court relative to families that came to them.[2]

As has been pointed out the first seating of the meeting house took place in 1744. By March of 1757 it was deemed advisable to do it anew and Deacon Brooks, Capt. Fletcher, Lt. Billing, and Nathan Robbins were chosen for the thankless and ticklish duty. Apparently

[1] Fletcher, p. 264.

[2] Hodgman, History of Westford, pages 57-61. The history of Chelmsford lists seventeen by name; see Hurd, *History of Middlesex County*, p. 254.

their efforts were not satisfactory in view of the fact that on May 20th the town voted "to do it all over again" and pitched the job back into the collective laps of the same committee after adding to it Samuel Jones, Ensign Hayward, John Davis, Jr., Ephraim Hosmer, Ephraim Hapgood and Nehemiah Wheeler. Furthermore the committee was specifically instructed to consider "age and personal and real estate".

The last qualification is illuminating. Despite the well known difficulties attendant upon the efforts of the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven such were at least to be accorded an advantage in hearing the message of salvation. A certain wag of the period is reputed to have put forth at one town meeting the droll proposition, which he defended with considerable ability and some support, that the outstanding sinners should be allotted the nearest seats since they most needed to hear the preacher. He did concede, however, that he could see no way in which his proposal would diminish the tribulations of the seating committee.

For the sake of completeness it should be here noted that the report of this augmented committee was in due course accepted.

The details of the next dozen years contain only items of small import if taken singly but in toto they give evidence of the development of the town. For instance, the May meeting of 1757 set up six school districts which same action was repeated in 1759 at which time the sum of two pounds was allotted to each district presumably for expenses other than teaching. In 1761 the office of Warden appears for the first time and continues for several years. No inkling is given as to the duties involved but in the first election Deacon Brooks was chosen for the southwest part of the town and Lt. Billing for the northeast. In the March meeting of 1763 Jonathan Billing (not to be confused with the Lt. Billing just mentioned) Josiah Piper, John Craigin, Joseph Robbins and Joseph Brooks were chosen as a committee to build a pound.[1] The same meeting gave permission to Jonathan Billing to build a "horsestable" on the town land near the meeting house. Since Mr. Billing lived at that time on what is now Esterbrook Road this item almost certainly refers to erection of a shelter for the horse of the honorable town treasurer during such periods as he was attending church or other sessions of consequence. Until the automobile became fully established as a means of convey-

[1] In a letter to the author dated August 13, 1950, Mr. Horace Tuttle states that he remembers the Old Pound distinctly. It was located between the present Centre School and Main Street and just to the east of the old school house which preceded the present one (built in 1871-72). This old school house was close to the big elm which now stands near the point of intersection of the school driveway and Nagog Hill Rd. The pound was an enclosure 40 or 50 feet square surrounded by a high and substantial stone wall with a gate at one corner. Mr. Tuttle does not recall that it was used for impounding cattle in his day or that there was a pound keeper. In his opinion it was removed at about the time the present school building was erected.

ance whole rows of such sheds were a common adjunct to all New England churches. Eventually they not only became useless as well as costly to maintain but were even suspect to the more pious of the community since they provided a decided invitation to surreptitious parking. Even so, for reasons of sentiment or public inertia, they can yet be found in isolated localities. The area around the church at the Centre had some dozen or more strung along the north and east boundaries until 1935.

Also during this period we find Acton credited with 611 inhabitants in the provincial census of 1765, which same by the way, was a suspect affair to many of the citizens since they saw it merely as a scheme on the part of England to manipulate the taxes; we find Micah Robbins and William Barker receiving payment as caretakers of the meeting house; and we find the town voting to allow those who served in the war against the French permission to work out their taxes if they so desired. In addition we find the appointment in 1767 of a committee to again arrange with Rev. Mr Swift concerning a new salary scale; the prosecution of Thomas Blanshard for refusing to serve as constable; and lastly, the election of Capt. Daniel Fletcher as Acton's first representative in the General Court.

As a matter of fact the question of sending a representative had been first considered and turned down in 1754. Similar action had been taken upon several subsequent occasions. Now, however, the posture of Massachusetts politics was such that the citizenry wanted to have a larger voice in events. In June of 1767 the British Parliament had entertained a bill to put a tax on glass, painters' colors, and tea, together with a scheme to establish at the port of Boston a customs official to collect the same. This agent met with short shrift and various meetings were held in Boston to draft letters of complaint which same were presented to Governor Bernard and to Parliament. Through the machinations of Bernard and lieutenant governor Hutchinson, acting in secret with secretary Hillsborough and other short sighted politicians in London, and in spite of the warnings of ex-governor Pownall, who immediately preceded Bernard,[1] the act was sustained, and the *Romney* and other ships of war were sent to Boston. The governor dismissed the General Court and made it known

[1] *Speech delivered in the House of Commons, May* 15, 1767. *"Believe me, there is not a province, a colony, or a plantation that will submit to a tax thus imposed. Don't fancy that you can divide the people upon this point. You will by this conduct only unite them more inseparably. The people of America, universally, unitedly, and unalterably, are resolved not to submit to any internal tax imposed upon them by any legislature in which they have not a share by representatives of their own election. This claim must not be understood as though it were the visions of speculative enthusiasts; as though it were the ebullition of a faction which must subside; as though it were only temporary or partial. It is the cool, deliberate, principled maxim of every man of business in the country."*

that he was expecting ample military aid to enforce any acts that Parliament might see fit to pass. Furthermore an officer appeared with authorization to arrange matters so that these soldiers upon arrival should be billeted upon the townspeople.

Immediately a town meeting was called at which a committee was appointed to await upon the governor and inquire the reason for his anticipation that additional troops would be stationed in the town. The governor refused to reply to the question or even the right of the people to ask it and likewise refused to call a general assembly to discuss the state of the province. In consequence the adjourned town meeting was reassembled and it was decided that there be a convention of all the towns to be held in Faneuil Hall in the near future. Boston chose as its representatives Thomas Cushing, James Otis, Samuel Adams and John Hancock. The selectmen were directed to write to the several towns, informing them of this design; and it was recommended that all the inhabitants should be provided with firearms and suitable ammunition. [1]

In consequence of these strained relations we find Acton voters assembled in town meeting on September 11, 1768 to choose a man to attend the convention at Boston on September 22nd "in order to consult His Majesty's Service & the Interest of this Province and pass any vote thereon". As might have been expected Capt. Daniel Fletcher was the logical choice for the town's representative.

On March 5th, 1770 considerable debate was occasioned in town meeting over a motion to enlarge the meeting house. It failed of passage by a vote of 50 to 41 but a committee consisting of Capt. Hayward, Joseph Robbins and Josiah Mansfield was chosen to make certain necessary repairs. This action, however, was not the high point of the session. Much more important matters of greater scope were before the house. The affairs of the colonies overshadowed every public meeting and this one more than any to date. In consequence the setting sun of that day saw the following votes passed by the men of Acton:

> *"Taking into consideration the distressed circumstances that this Province and all North America are involved in by reason of the Acts of Parliament imposing duties and taxes for the sole purpose to raise a Revenue, and when the Royal ear seems to be stopt against all our humble Prayers and petitions for redress of grievances, and considering the Salutary Measures that the Body of Merchants and Traders in this province have come into in order for the redress of the*

[1] J. S. Barry, *History of Massachusetts*, vol. ii, p. 366. Ninety six towns and eight districts responded by sending delegates, a practically complete representation. The convention lasted six days.

many troubles that we are involved in, and to support and maintain our Charter Rights and Privilege and to prevent our total Ruin and Destruction, taking all these things into serious Consideration, came into the following votes:

"1*st. That we will use our utmost endeavors to encourage and support the body of merchants and traders in their endeavors to retrieve this Province out of its present Distresses to whom this Town vote their thanks for the Constitutional and spirited measures pursued by them for the good of this Province.*

2. *That from this Time we shall have no commercial or social connection with those who at this time do refuse to contribute to the relief of this abused country—especially those that import British Goods contrary to the Agreement of the body of merchants of Boston or elsewhere, that we will not afford them our Custom, but treat them with the utmost neglect and all those who countenance them.*

3. *That we will use our utmost endeavors to prevent the consumption of all superfluities, and that we will use our utmost Endeavors to promote and encourage our own manufactures.*

4. *That the Town Clerk transmit a copy of these votes to the Committee of Merchants of inspection at Boston.*

" *A true copy attested.*

Francis Faulkner,
Town Clerk."

As the men of Acton passed these votes, thereby putting themselves in the vanguard of those who stood for personal rights and communal self respect, they little suspected that before the next sunrise blood would run in the streets of Boston and that Crispus Attucks, Samuel Gray, James Caldwell, Samuel Meverick, and Patrick Carr would give up their lives in what has gone down in history as the Boston Massacre. With the passage of the years it has become evident to historians that these men were most certainly not Boston's leading citizens. As a plain matter of fact they were waterfront bruisers of established reputation, and diverse Tories may not have been far amiss when they referred to them as "Sam Adams' cudgel boys". In any event they went out on the night of March fifth looking for trouble and found it (noble cause to the contrary notwithstanding) and thereby augmented the conflict that eventually caught up Acton in its toils and put our imposing monument on the common.

Two months later the voters of Acton took an educational step that was forward-looking for that day and age. They decided to apply one third of the school money toward a "women's school".

In order to appreciate this innovation one must be acquainted with the status of arithmetic in the common schools of the era. Bronson Alcott (born 1799) states that even as late as his time spelling, reading, and writing constituted the complete curriculum for the day schools but that upon occasion arithmetic was taught two nights a week by those rare teachers who had the ability, vitality, and inclination to do so.

During the colonial period "ciphering", when taught at all, consisted of the most elementary operations with whole numbers. It was the exceptional teacher who possessed even a fair knowledge of fractions[1] and the intricacies of simple proportion, then known as the "rule of three". If some pupil of rare genius managed to master fractions and proportion thoroughly he was adjudged a finished mathematician.

School appliances in those days, other than the ferule and the birch rod as implements of discipline, were wholly wanting. Slates were unknown until some years after the Revolution and blackboards were non-existent even in the colleges, until introduced by the Rev. Samuel J. May of Boston who had seen them in France in 1813. Paper was so costly that as a result old letters, blank pages taken from ledgers and day books, and even birch bark, were requisitioned.[2]

In two of the most forward schools of Philadelphia of the period the boys were taught reading, writing and arithmetic and the girls spent their time on reading, writing, and sewing. Warren Burton in his book entitled, "The District School as it was by one who went to it", says that "a school mistress would as soon have expected to teach Arabic as the numerical science".

The idea of the women's school had as its objective two things. In the first place the subjects could be chosen in accord with what was then considered proper for young ladies to know. Secondly, the pupils, being all girls, a woman could handle the instruction and the discipline and give to the enterprise an atmosphere of gentility and decorum quite impossible in the more typical school operated under the aegis of a well muscled and determined schoolmaster chosen primarily for his ability as a manhandler of obstreperous and husky youths endowed with mere vestigial inclinations toward learning but enormous penchants for malicious mischief.

Now and then young boys in the beginning classes, if of delicate

[1] Florian Cajori, *The Teaching and History of Mathematics in the United States*, page 9.

[2] Cajori, *ibid.*, p. 10. In this connection the Acton records themselves bear witness. The town clerks in many instances filled in the bottoms of pages with minor notations in complete disregard of chronological sequence. Some items appear as much as forty years out of place.

health or sensitive disposition, were allowed to attend the women's school until such time as it became embarrassing for them.

Evidence that other notions were stirring in school affairs is given by the fact that a special town meeting was held on November 13, 1771 to ascertain whether or not a grammar school should be maintained for a portion of the current year. Even though the single article in the warrant was dismissed and the meeting immediately adjourned it was significant that the townspeople were even willing to convene to consider such a proposal.

It will be recalled that the first schools in Acton were "moving schools" that functioned progressively at the homes of citizens in various parts of the town. Subsequently four schoolhouses were built by private funds and these sufficed until 1771 at which time the town built one in the Center just down the hill from the meeting house on the northeast side of Nagog Hill Road. Apparently it was no more than erected before certain persons desired that it be moved since we find an article to that effect in the town warrant for March of 1772. The vote when taken was in the negative as was another taken the following May. The May meeting did, however, vote "To see if the town will agree upon a new place for the school house to stand for the center of the town or pass any vote that may be thought proper". As a result of the discussion Lt. Billing, Capt. Davies and Simon Hunt were selected as a committee "to pitch upon a new place for the school in the middle of the town". The committee recommended that the school house be built on the north side of the highway that leads from the west end of the town to the meeting house near to the corner of Rev. Swift's wall. The meeting voted so to do.

This same meeting made educational history by voting that the existing school houses be assessed by a disinterested judge and purchased by the town. In consequence Mr. Jonathan Patch made the valuation estimates and the town treasurer was ordered to pay fourteen pounds eight shillings for the building standing near the meeting house, fifteen pounds fourteen shillings eight pence for the one at Strawberry Hill, and seven pounds nine shillings four pence for the one near Deacon Heald's, this latter being about halfway between the old north burying ground and the Carlisle line on what is now Carlisle Street.

Since the time of the Boston Massacre the estrangement between the crown and the colonies had gone from bad to worse. Men elected to the governor's council were constantly being rejected by Hutchinson, British war ships in considerable numbers had been sent to Boston harbor (twelve in the summer of 1771), the General Court had been either prorogued or called upon to sit in Cambridge rather than Boston, and finally the word had come that the salaries of

the king's officials in the province were to be paid by the Crown. Since this included the stipends to the local judges it was beheld with amazement and considered a barefaced scheme for prostituting the courts.

On October 28, 1772 a huge town meeting, presided over by John Hancock, convened in Boston and an address was prepared for his excellency requesting the truth of the matter. The request was dismissed as improper. In consequence a new petition was drafted declaring "such an establishment contrary, not only to the plain and obvious sense of the charter of the province, but also to some of the fundamental principles of common law, to the benefit of which all British subjects, wherever dispersed, are indubitably entitled", and requesting the matter to be referred to the General Court.[1]

This petition was likewise rejected and in addition Hutchinson refused to convene the General Court for the December session as had been previously agreed. The reason given was that by so doing he would not only be acting contrary to the wishes of the king but would also be encouraging other towns of the province to assemble from time to time in the effort to unlawfully influence the crown officers in the discharge of their duties.

Naturally such a reply fanned the animosities already only barely under control. As a result a committee of twenty one, known as a committee of correspondence, was set up for the town of Boston the purpose of which was to set forth the rights of the colonists, to point out the infringements that had been made upon these rights, and to publish the said state of affairs to the several towns of the province in the hope of receiving from them "a free communication of your sentiments".[2]

Pursuant of the letter sent to Acton a special town meeting was convened on December 21, 1772 the chief purpose of which was

> *"To see if the town will hear the Letter of Correspondence with the other papers directed to this town by the Town of Boston Relating to the Late Measures of the British Administration in the violation of our rights and Privileges which will be communicated to the Town in order to act thereon as the Town shall think proper".*

On this item the Acton voters registered a decided affirmative as might have been expected and proceeded immediately to appoint Capt. Daniel Fletcher, Francis Faulkner, Ephraim Hapgood, Capt. Samuel Hayward, Simon Tuttle and Daniel Brooks as a committee to draft a proper reply to be laid before the town at an adjourned

[1] *Boston Post Boy* for November 2, 1772.

[2] On this point Hutchinson states (*Hist.* iii, 368, note) that there was such concern to obtain universal consent that even a district of two hundred Indians, called Mashpee, was not omitted.

meeting on the following January eighteenth.

The townspeople assembled again on the date specified and since the meeting was of such great importance the clerk's report will be given herewith in detail

> *"At a meeting of the freeholders and other votable inhabitants of the Town of Acton Legally Assembled on Monday the 18th Day of January* 1773 *by adjournament from the 21st Day of December Last to Consider the State of the Rights of the Colonists and the violation and Infringements of the Rights and report a Draft of Such votes as they mey think Best for the Town to come into, report in the words following:*
>
> *"Taking into Serious Consideration the Allarming Curcumstances of the Province Relating to the violations of our Charter Rights and Privilidges as we apprehend by the British Administration are of the Oppinion that the Rights of the Collinests, Natural, Ecletiasticle and Civil are well stated by the Town of Boston and it is our opinion the Taxing of us without our Consent, the making the Governor of the Province and the Judges of the Superior Court independant of the People and Dependent on the Crown by Having there Salarys Paid by the Crown out of the money Extorted from us and Many other Instances of incroachments upon our Said Charter Rights are Intolerably Grevious and Have a Direct tendency to overthrow our Hapy Constitution and Bring us into a State of Abject Slavery but we have a Gracious Sovereign who is the Father of America as well as of Grate Britian and as the man in Whom we had no confidence is Removed from Before the throne and another in whom we hope to have the cause to put Confidence Placed in His Stead we hope that Petition will be forwarded and heard and all our Grevences Redrest."*

The foregoing was an exact summary of the sentiments of the Acton committee and moreover of the townspeople since it was immediately passed. It was a restrained and sober document written by men of wisdom who still wished solemnly to adhere to their king and country but who, nevertheless, knew their rights as Englishmen and intended to continue to state their case as they saw it with dignity and determination.

At this same meeting the town went still further on record by voting that

> *"as we have no representative in the House of Representatives we Earnestly Recommend to the Representative*

Body of this Province that you Gent. Inspect with a Jealous Eye our Charter Rights and Privledges and that you use every Constitutionally Method to Obtain the Redress of all our Grevences and that you Strenuesly Endeavor in Such ways as you in your wisdom think fit that the Hon. Judge of the Superior Court may have their Support as formerly agreeable to the Charter of this Province."

The meeting was adjourned after it had been voted that "the sincere thanks of this town be given to the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston for their Spirited Endeavor to Defend our Rights and Priviledges Inviolate when threatened with Destruction".

At just about this time Governor Hutchinson convened the legislature and took occasion to comment with considerable severity upon the establishment of the committees of correspondence and in particular their attempt to call in question the authority of Great Britian. This attitude in itself was enough to cause strained relations between the governor and the legislature but before long it became known that certain secret letters from Hutchinson to Whateley, his friend in England, made it perfectly clear that the sympathies of the governor were completely with the King. How these letters were obtained remains a mystery even to this day but in any event they were forwarded to Boston by Dr. Franklin the agent of the province, and were soon the common knowledge of the committees of correspondence and the assembly.

All through the summer and autumn of 1773 the argument concerning the landing of tea continued to occupy the stage. Meetings were frequent, merchants were warned both by letter and by groups of incensed patriots not to become involved in any way in the disposal of such shipments of tea as should arrive at the port of Boston.

Finally, on December 16th, the ship Dartmouth, together with others, lay at the wharf ready to unload unless drastic measures were taken. Those measures are now a matter of history and by the dawn of December 17, 1773 three hundred and forty two chests of tea had disappeared on the outgoing tide and the famous Boston Tea Party was on the record for better or worse.

With this action the whole quarrel had been thrust out into the open where none could cover it up. Facts as well as rumors spread apace across the countryside and caught up all the citizenry of the colonies, far outside of Massachusetts, in a spasm of suspense and conjecture. Town meetings galore were held to formulate opinion and in this current Acton was as ardent as the rest. On January 17, 1774 a special town meeting was held to consider papers received from Boston and it was voted that Joseph Hayward, Mark White,

Deacon Brooks, Francis Faulkner, and Daniel Fletcher be a committee to draft resolves and report at the annual meeting in March.

The aforesaid meeting was convened on March 7th, 1774. Article two of the warrant read as follows; "To hear the report of the Committee that was Chosen at our last Town meeting to form Resolves to Lay Before the Town at this meeting Relating to the East India Company Sending Their Tea to the Port of Boston Subject to a Duty to be Laid upon its Being Landed by an Act of the British Parliment and act thereon as the Town shall think Proper when met".

The record does not give the text of the reply drawn up by the committee but does state that it was accepted by a unanimous vote.

At this same meeting, even though the relations with England claimed the forefront of attention, certain matters of local concern were taken up that deserve comment.

Article four was "to see if the town will agree to move the school house that stands near Mr. Joseph Pipers[1] according to the reports of the committee that was chosen to agree upon the Centers for the schools in the Town or grant to Samuel Fitch and a number of his neighbors who think themselves injured by being too remote from any schools so much money yeerly as they pay to the school to be expended in their Neighborhood in Schooling."

On this article it was decided that Samuel Fitch, David Lamson, John Lamson, William Jonson and the Widow Temple shall have so much money yearly for a school as they pay to the School Rate.

Also at this same meeting it was decided to fence the burying place and assess the expense exempting those living in the northeast part of the town because they had built a stone wall (still standing) around that cemetery. In addition Lt. Billing was to be exempted in the event that he built "a good gate". The town went on from there to vote that , "Ensign Joseph Robbins, Simon Hunt, and Joseph Barker be a committee for the said purpose, said committee to compleat said fence with a good wall by the last day of September next. Also voted that said committee shall deliver a bill of the charges that shall be due for fencing the Burying ground to the assessors and the assessors do assess the town for the same."

Of course this action, and the wall built as a result of it, refers only to that portion of Woodlawn Cemetery containing the old slate gravestones. The presumption would be that the wall when built would have enclosed an area somewhat larger than the immediate necessities demanded. As has already been pointed out, the first deed was given by Nathan Robbins[2] for one half acre (January 16,

[1] Now the residence of Mr. Edward Bursaw.
[2] Fletcher p. 246.

1737). A second deed was given by Joseph Robbins on December 11, 1769, for a small tract adjoining the southeast corner. Apparently the wall mentioned above included this new area which was not at that time utilized to any considerable degree. A third deed was dated November 2, 1812, a fourth January 4, 1844, and a fifth August 22, 1862. Fletcher gives the area as of 1890 as between eleven and twelve acres and states that the oldest inscribed slab is dated 1743. It must not be understood, however, that this date identifies the first interment since many of the graves are merely unmarked mounds or depressions or have stones taken from the field without date or inscription.

During this time the irritation relative to the town lines between Acton and Stow seems to have been kept alive since we find that in May of 1774 it was voted to take legal action and prosecute the selectmen of Stow for refusing to perambulate the bounds. Before the matter reached the courts an agreement, whether amicable or otherwise , was reached, and the selectmen of the two towns met and made the necessary inspection and signed a statement to that effect which same appears in the town record with the respective signatures.

One other item is of passing interest since it shows the general outlook at that time with respect to one's financial obligations to the town. During the year 1774 Titus Law had the misfortune to have his dwelling completely consumed by fire. In consequence he besought the town to abate his taxes for that year. The citizens when convened voted in the negative as any native New Englander would expect. As a matter of fact the author's ancestor of this period, Joseph Reed, who was at Concord Fight and Bunker Hill and then saw service throughout most of the war,[1] returned to find that his farm had been sold for taxes.[2]

By late summer of 1774 the cast of public opinion was taking shape prophetic of things to come. The populace was apprehensive but withal determined. On August 30th and 31st one hundred and fifty delegates met in a county convention at Concord at which Hon. James Prescott of Groton presided. The Acton delegates were Francis Faulkner, John Hayward, and Ephraim Hapgood.

Nineteen resolutions bearing on the state of the[3] province were brought before this body and passed after serious and dignified debate. The spirit in which these difficult matters were discussed is best understood by a consideration of the following excerpts taken from the preamble and concluding paragraph of the document as finally accepted.

[1] Fletcher, page 263.
[2] See minutes of town meeting of March 9, 1781.
[3] Shattuck, page 83.



DAVIS'S COMPANY DEPARTING FOR CONCORD
From an Oil Painting by A. F. Davis



BLOODY BUTCHERY.

BY THE

BRITISH TROOPS:

OR THE

RUNAWAY FIGHT OF THE REGULARS.

BEING the PARTICULARS of the VICTORIOUS BATTLE fought at and near CONCORD, situated Twenty Miles from Boston, in the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay, between Two Thousand Regular Troops, belonging to His Britannic Majesty, and a few Hundred Provincial Troops, belonging to the Province of Massachusetts Bay, which lasted from sunrise until sunset, on the 19th of April, 1775, when it was decided greatly in favor of the latter. These particulars are published in this cheap form, at the request of the friends of the deceased WORTHIES, who died gloriously fighting in the CAUSE of LIBERTY and their COUNTRY, and it is their sincere desire that every Householder in the country, who are sincere well-wishers to America, may be possessed of the same, either to frame and glaze, or otherwise to preserve in their houses, not only as a Token of Gratitude to the memory of the Deceased Every Persons, but as a perpetual record of that important event, on which, perhaps, may depend the future Freedom and Greatness of the Commonwealth of America. To which is annexed a Funeral Elegy on those who were slain in the Battle.

[illegible] Battle [illegible] Concord [illegible] Lexington [illegible] Monday [illegible] Provincials [illegible] Regulars [illegible] Concord [illegible] Lexington

"It is evident to every attentive mind that this Province is in a very dangerous and alarming situation. We are obliged to say, however painful it may be to us, that the question now is whether, by a submission to some late Acts of the Parliament of Great Britian, we are contented to be the most abject slaves, and entail that slavery on posterity after us, or, by a manly, joint, and virtuous opposition, assert and support our freedom. There is a mode of conduct, which in our very critical circumstances, we would wish to adopt, - a conduct on the one hand never tamely submissive to tyranny and oppression, on the other, never degenerating into rage, passion, and confusion. There is a spirit which we revere, as we find it exhibited in former ages, and which command applause to latest posterity. The late Acts of Parliament pervade the whole system of jurisprudence by which means we think the fountains of justice are fatally corrupted. Our defense must therefore be immediate in proportion to the suddenness of the attack, and vigorous in proportion to the danger. We must now exert ourselves, or all those efforts which for ten years past have brightened the annals of this country, will be totally frustrated. Life and Death, or what is more, Freedom and Slavery, are in a peculiar sense now before us, and the choice and success, under God, depend greatly on ourselves. We are therefore bound, as struggling not only for ourselves, but for future generations, to express our sentiments in the following resolves,—sentiments, which we think are founded on truth and justice and therefore sentiments we are determined to abide by."

"These are great and profound questions. We are grieved to find ourselves reduced to the necessity of entering into the discussion of them. But we deprecate a state of slavery. Our fathers left a fair inheritance to us, purchased by a waste of blood and treasure. This we are resolved to transmit equally fair to our children after us. No danger shall affright, no difficulties intimidate us. And if in support of our rights we are called to encounter even death, we are yet undaunted, sensible that he can never die too soon, who lays down his life in support of the laws and liberties of his country."

The lead taken by Boston and the towns thereabout in the matter of committees of correspondence began immediately to take effect. The populace saw thereby a means of keeping in touch with the march of events and in addition a device for circumventing in large

measure the machinations of an unpopular administration. If the governor refused to call the regular session of the General Court an organization was now available to convene a provincial congress.

In matters of this nature Acton played its part and we find that a special town meeting called on October 3rd, with Capt. Samuel Hayward acting as moderator, the town took three important steps. In the first place Josiah Hayward was elected as representative to the General Court if and when the governor dared to call it into session. Secondly, Francis Faulkner and Ephraim Hapgood were chosen as delegates to a provincial congress to be held at Concord the second Tuesday of October. Thirdly, Ephraim Hapgood, Francis Faulkner, John Hayward, Mark White, and Capt. Samuel Hayward were elected as a committee of correspondence for the town.

This date of October 3, 1774, together with the list of men just mentioned should be well marked. It defines the time when Acton cast in its lot against the Crown and the committee sets out in relief forever those who were to guide the political destiny of the town in the very earliest stages of its progress along the chosen path of resistance.

The provincial congress aforementioned convened as arranged on October 11th with two hundred and eighty eight delegates. John Hancock presided and Benjamin Lincoln served as secretary. An address was directed to Governor Gage without avail and in consequence the body adjourned to Cambridge on October fifteenth, presumably to be closer to the focus of affairs. Even so no favorable action resulted and consequently a motion to adjourn was passed on October 17th.

The spirits of the citizenry were fully aroused. Very shortly after the meeting of October third, only a few days in fact, a mass meeting was held on Concord Common at which time a committee was chosen, with Robert Chaffin of Acton as chairman, before whom every person suspected of being a Tory was compelled to appear for trial.[1] An ordeal known as "humbling the Tories" was devised and applied to more than a few of the stubborn royalists.[2] The exact nature of this punishment is not recorded but we do know that it varied from community to community and also depended upon the ingenuity of the admonishing committee and the degree of truculence of the victim.

It was a natural step from the state of affairs to the carrying of arms and the training in military technique. In consequence a company of minute men was raised by volunteer enlistment in November of

[1] Shattuck, p. 89.

[2] Robert Chaffin lived in the house now occupied by Mrs. Amanda Bulette on Newtown Road. John owned the next house, now the home of Mr. Ralph C. Choate.

1774. Isaac Davis, a gunsmith by trade, and a man of extreme sobriety and sound judgement, was elected captain and by mutual agreement the company met twice each week for instruction and drill.

This was wholly voluntary. The town took no action until several weeks later when on December 5th a meeting was held at which article four of the warrant read as follows:

> *"To see if the Town will Chuse a Committee to Proius the Minute Men in the Town".*

The word "Proius" is obscure. It is legibly written and there can be no doubt as to the intent of the clerk with respect to the spelling. In any event the article was dismissed and the members of Davis' company went about their military duties without aid or interference from the town for another month.

Early in the new year of 1775, on January 4th in fact, a committee consisting of Lt. Billing, Capt. Samuel Hayward, Lt. John Heald, Josiah Piper, Deacon Brooks, Joseph Robbins and Francis Faulkner was selected to see that the resolves of the Continental Congress, in particular the Association of the said Congress, were strictly observed in the town.

By the middle of January the people had become aware that it was their duty to support the Minute Men so on the 18th it was

> *"voted to pay thirty men, if so many shall Inlist, Eight Pence per Day twice in a week they to spend in Exersising three Hours in Each Day untill the first Day of may Next, also voted that any man that Does not atend his Duty on Said Day for Exercise within Half and Hour of the time Perfixed Shall not be Intitled to any Pay for that Day."*

In addition to the military preparations many of the towns were refusing to make payment to the provincial treasurer of the annual tax allotments. Acton was staunchly in line on this issue. At a meeting called in December of 1774 with Capt. Samuel Hayward acting as moderator it was voted that

> *"the town will raise* 20 *pounds* 10 *shillings* 10 *pence for the use of the province, also voted that the constable do pay the said sum to the treasurer of the Town and that said Money be Paid out by order of the Selectmen, also voted that this town will Defend and Save Harmless the Assessors of this Town for their not making return of the Province Rate to Harrison Gray, Esq. this present year."*

As the posture of affairs moved to a climax General Gage was not remiss in his duties either. On February 10th he sent to Worcester two spies, Capt. Brown of the 52nd regiment and Ensign D'Bernicre

of the 10th regiment.[1] They wore brown clothes and reddish handkerchieves tucked into their necks. On March 20th they again set forth, this time through Roxbury, Brookline, Weston, and Sudbury to Concord with the objective in view of ascertaining where military stores might be secreted and the best roads of approach. They fooled nobody since their mission was immediately known and spread broadcast. On the other hand they learned much from the several loyalists with whom they lodged particularly from a Mr. Bliss in Concord.

In addition it became the custom at about this time for large contingents of redcoats to take practice marches several miles into the hinterland. No doubt this was partly due to the fact that the winter of 1774-75 was amazingly mild, some of the days being of summertime character. But the balmy weather was not the sole reason as the yeomanry well knew, both from common sense and from certain aggravating episodes. For instance, Rev. Mr. Gordon of Roxbury records how one such expedition of one thousand men marched to Jamaica Plain by way of Dorchester on March 30th during which the soldiers amused themselves by pushing over the stone walls along the wayside.

This sally doubtless gave rise to the false rumor which was immediately circulated to the effect that the British were enroute for Concord. The excitement was so great that some carried arms at all times, even to church. The provincial committee met on April 1, 5, 14, and 17th and on the latter date ordered Col. Barrett to raise an artillery company and to send four cannon to Groton and two to Acton.

At this time there were in Middlesex County two regiments of the military, one of the regular militia and one of minute men. The militia had for officers the following personnel:

Colonel, James Barrett, Concord,
Lt. Colonel, Ezekiel Howe, Sudbury,
Captains, Nathen Barrett, George Minot, Concord,
Joseph Robbins, Acton,
John Moore, Bedford,
Samuel Farrar, Lincoln,
Moses Stone, Aaron Haynes, Sudbury,

and for the regiment of Minute Men;

Colonel, Abijah Pierce, Lincoln,
Lt. Colonel, Thomas Nixon, Framingham,
Majors, John Buttrick, Concord,

[1] Frank W. Coburn; *The Battle of April 19th*, 1775, p. 16. This little volume, written by a native of Lexington, gives the most detailed and authentic account of the incidents of the whole day, from the start of the British from Charlestown until their return at dusk.

Jacob Miller, Holliston,
Adjutant, Thomas Hurd, East Sudbury,
Captains, David Brown, Charles Miles, Concord,
Isaac Davis, Acton,
William Smith, Lincoln,
Jonathan Wilson, Bedford,
John Nixon, Sudbury.

According to a committee appointed by the Provincial Congress to look into the matter in detail there were at this time[1] in the vicinity of Boston about 2850 British troops distributed as follows: Boston Common 1700, Fort Hill 400, Boston Neck 340, in barracks at the Castle 330, King Street 80. This total included grenadiers, dragoons and about 460 marines under Major John Pitcairn.

About 800 of these, consisting of light infantry, grenadiers and marines were taken off regular duty on Saturday, April 15th under the pretense of preparing for special maneuvers. At ten o'clock Tuesday evening, April 18th they embarked from Boston under the command of Lt. Col. Francis Smith and Major Pitcairn. They landed an Lechmere Point, each man provided with one day's rations and thirty six rounds of ammunition. Due to the fact that the Lechmere shore was marshy and shallow the soldiers had to wade several rods in water above their knees. In consequence the column was slow in forming. From the standpoint of the common foot soldier it was a welcome circumstance that the night was almost balmy and the moon was just past the full. But for sheer luck the ground could have been covered a foot deep with frozen slush with razorlike edges that would have cut their boots to ribbons before they were halfway to Lexington.

The object of the foray was to destroy the stores in Concord and to apprehend Adams, Hancock, and any other important rebels that might fall into the net. As an additional precaution Gage had sent along the day before ten men with instructions to watch the roads during the night for suspicious persons who might be couriers carrying the alarm.

The British thought that they had been very cautious in concealing their plans for the expedition to Concord but it is long since a matter of history how wrong they were. The ever vigilant Sons of Liberty were aware of their every move and even before the completion of the crossing of the Charles two riders, Paul Revere and William Dawes, who had been chosen for the task several weeks in advance, were on their way to warn the countryside. Due to the Longfellow poem the part played by Dawes never had its full share of attention. He arrived first at the rendezvous, the residence of Dr.

[1] Coburn: *Battle of April 19th*, 1775, p. 14.

Warren, and since his was the longer route to Lexington (via Roxbury, Brookline, Brighton, Harvard Square) he was the first to start. Revere, on the other hand, crossed the river by boat directly into Charlestown and made his way through Medford and Arlington (Menotomy) to the residence of the Rev. Mr. Clark in Lexington which he reached about midnight and gave the warning to Adams and Hancock who were tarrying there for the night. In about half an hour Dawes arrived and together they pushed on to Concord. Very shortly they were overtaken by young Dr. Samuel Prescott of Concord who had been courting his fianceé, a Miss Mullikin of Lexington. The three rode on together and inasmuch as Prescott knew the dwellers along the route he was valuable in assuring them of the genuineness of the alarm.

As the trio were traversing that portion of the highway that lies in Lincoln they were accosted[1] by four of the armed sentries sent forward by Gage the day previous. They were all armed and threatened to, "blow out your brains", unless surrender was immediate. There was some little exchange of argument and in the meleé Prescott, being thoroughly familiar with the surrounding countryside, suddenly put his horse over the low stone wall and hastened to Concord by a route that only a native could know.[2] Dawes and Revere were retained and questioned for a couple of hours and then released. The length of Revere's ride from the Charlestown shore to the place of capture was about sixteen miles.

The story of the progress of the British to Lexington and the one-sided engagement there which resulted in the needless death of eight minute men is fully told in several authentic histories. Our interest lies in what happened with respect to Acton. Prescott arrived in Concord in sufficient time so that the alarm bells were rung at three o'clock. Immediately, by prearrangement, other couriers set out in various directions. No record has been kept of the identity of the

[1] Modern alterations, decidedly for the worse, have removed all semblance of the landscape as it then was but the spot is marked by a large bronze tablet on a field stone. The photograph facing page 28 in Coburn shows the appearance as of about 1915.

[2] Frederic Hudson, writing in *Harpers Magazine* for May, 1875, (page 785) asserts that Prescott gave the alarm in Lincoln so that the men from that town were able to assemble in Concord almost as soon as the Concord companies. This must mean that Prescott, after eluding the British, returned to the highway and warned the few residents who lived on the remaining portion of it lying within the boundaries of Lincoln. He certainly did not go several miles out of his way to pass through Lincoln village. The elapsed time between the departure from Lexington and the arrival in Concord makes it well nigh impossible.

In the same article Hudson replaces William Dawes by an individual named Ebenezer Dorr (*Harpers*, page 782) a leather dresser, and even shows a sketch of him. This is an interesting contradiction of all other writers concerning Revere's associate on the night of April 18th.

person who came to Acton but, whoever he was, he rode up to the house of Capt. Joseph Robbins, located a few rods east of the burying ground,[1] struck sharply on the corner board with a bludgeon and at the same time shouted the well known words seen so often by every Acton youngster, "Capt. Robbins! Capt. Robbins! The regulars are coming!", that are inscribed on the granite field stone marker designating the site of the old house.

According to Fletcher the message contained the additional admonition for Capt. Robbins to rendezvous at the old North Bridge and to alarm the rest of Acton as soon as possible. Accordingly young John Robbins (aged exactly thirteen since April 19th, 1762 was his birthday) hastily mounted his father's mare and started for the home of Capt. Isaac Davis about a mile away, and then on to Deacon Simon Hunt's, who commanded the West Company.[2]

Some unknown rider, possibly the same one, took the alarm to the house of Francis Faulkner[3] which still stands in what is now South Acton village. He was one of the town's outstanding citizens. He operated the mills which, until the coming of the railroad, gave the settlement its name of Faulkner's Mills. There was at first only a saw mill and a grist mill but later a fulling mill was added which was among the very first efforts in the manufacture of woolen cloth in this country.

As young Francis Faulkner, Jr., a boy of fifteen, lay awake early in the morning of April 19th he heard the clatter of hoofbeats approaching the house. Being fully aware of the tenseness of affairs and of the likelihood of a British advance, he immediately sensed the import of the arriving horseman. He leaped from his bed, ran to his father's chamber and cried, "Father, there's a horse coming

[1] Capt. Robbins' house, reputedly the first painted house in Acton, had not only that distinction but was also the first one erected in town since it was the one built by Thomas Wheeler. It had been moved from its original location at the end of the lane on the opposite side of the highway. The barn was struck by lightning in 1830 and totally consumed. The house stood thereafter unoccupied for years until it was likewise burned. The field stone marker, setting a few feet in front of the old well and celler hole, was dedicated April 18th, 1895. It came from the farm of Mr. Luther Conant.

Mr. Fred Robbins holds the deed to the cellar hole and the small plot on which the alarm stone stands. Eventually the historic tract will revert to the town.

From the old Robbins house there was taken at one time a plan of the land holdings of Concord Village, drawn by Stephen Hosmer. A copy in good condition is in the Acton library but since the lots are merely numbered and only a few names appear the map is more of a curiosity than an historical asset.

[2] Frederick Hudson, writing in *Harpers* of May, 1875, p. 786, asserts this this rider to be the same Samuel Prescott who brought the alarm to Concord.

[3] Fletcher (p. 255) is in error when he asserts that young John Robbins was ten years of age. The town records give no John Robbins born in 1765. Furthermore John Robbins, Esq. is listed as having died in 1836 at age 74, which checks with the date 1762 as given above.

on the full run and he's bringing news". Colonel Francis, however, was already partially dressed with his accouterments at hand. The horseman crossed the bridge by the mill dam and arriving at the house shouted, "Rouse your men Mr. Faulkner! The British are marching on Lexington and Concord!", then away he sped to carry the message westward.

Without stopping to dress Col. Faulkner fired his musket three times as rapidly as he could load, that being the prearranged signal to call out the minute men. Almost immediately a neighbor repeated it and young Francis related in later life the great thrill that was his as he heard the guns, ever fainter and fainter, carrying the alarm over the countryside. Signal fires were also lighted and the households awoke to the grim business of the day — which all deplored but which could not be averted by wishful thinking.

Very shortly the minute men began to arrive, accoutered with musket, powder horn, bullet pouch, and a ration of bread and cheese. So great was the tension that some brought along wives and children who would not be denied knowing just what was being done. Stakes were driven down and huge kettles hung in preparation for the cooking of beef, pork, potatoes, and cabbage, which was to be made into packages and transported in saddle bags by young boys as a noon meal for the soldiers. It could have been carried in a single wagon so far as bulk was concerned but some who had seen warfare before pointed out in such case it might be captured in toto should it develop that the British had command of the highway to Concord.

During these preliminaries Capt. Simon Hunt took command of the company in order to release Col. Faulkner for the duties that would occupy him upon his arrival at Concord. Meantime word had come from Capt. Isaac Davis that his men were coming in and that he would start by the route through Acton Centre as soon as thirty of his company had assembled. Shortly thereafter the line formed on the lawn south of the Faulkner house leaving the women grim and tearful, to complete the preparation of the rations.

Meanwhile other patriots were gathering at the house of Isaac Davis, the respected and godly gunsmith of the town. Among the very earliest to arrive was the local schoolmaster, James Hayward, not a member of the company and exempt from military service because of the loss of the toes of one foot from an axe cut, but none the less a man if ever one lived as the events of the day were to prove. In consequence of his craft, in which he was a master, Davis had provided his men with bayonets and one arrival, observing Hayward busily engaged at the grindstone, inquired the reason for his industry. "Because", said he, "I expect before night we shall come to a push with them and I want my bayonet sharp".

Davis was a brave man, a Puritan, and a mystic. As he marched his company out of the yard in the glorious April morning he was heard to remark, "I have a right to go to Concord on the King's highway: and I will go to Concord". Thereupon Luther Blanchard, the fifer, and Francis Barker, the drummer, broke out the stirring rythm of the White Cockade and the company set off toward the sunrise. Of them all only Davis marched with the sure conviction that when they returned he would not be of their number.

The Rev. James T. Woodbury, who was predominantly influential in securing for Acton the imposing monument on the common, was a friend of Mrs. Davis during the latter part of her long life. He frequently talked with her concerning the events of the day of Concord Fight and made reference to her remarks in his writings and speeches. Upon one occasion, several weeks before the events at Concord, while driving past the cemetery, Davis saw a white bird flying in circles above the family lot and told his wife immediately that it was an omen of death.[1]

In his speech before the Massachusetts Legislature[2] Woodbury tells of a most singular occurrence that happened just a few days prior to April 19th. For some reason Capt. Davis and his wife had been absent from home on an errand. They entered the house together and were confronted by a large owl sitting on the captain's favorite gun as it hung on the hooks, even though several other samples of his surpassing workmanship were also in the room. The owl sat motionless for several days and by Davis's specific order, was permitted to remain until such time as the ill omen sought to depart voluntarily. In consequence, as his company marched away on that fatal morning, this man, marked by destiny for all time, called a halt a few rods from the house, walked thoughtfully back to bid his wife one more fond farewell and say to her, "Take good care of the children".

With Isaac Davis patriotism was an inner spiritual force. The Rev. Brooks Noyes, a native of Acton who lived as a boy in the house now owned by Mr. Howard Billings, published in 1925 a short brochure entitled "The Tell-Tale Tomb" in which he comments upon his interviews with the grandaughter of the great patriot. She made it clear in all her remarks that the cardinal trait in her ancestor was the mystical quality. In this connection there is an

[1] Born Hannah Brown (1749). After the death of Capt. Davis she married Samuel Jones (1782) and a third husband, Francis Leighton, (1802). After his demise she spent the latter years of her life with her grand-daughter, Mrs. Simon Davis (Harriet Noyes) occupying the house now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Boatman (Thelma Noyes). She died in December, 1841. For further details see Fletcher, p. 262.

[2] Major portion given in Fletcher, p. 257. Full text may be found in Acton Library in book entitled "Historical Papers", vol. 2.

interesting incident in point. Upon one occasion the Rev. John Swift, who rarely had the temerity to preach the full time until the sand in the hour glass had run out, presented a masterly discourse upon the state of the colonies. At the conclusion Davis's sensibilities had been so deeply stirred that he applauded and boldly requested that the pastor turn the glass and repeat the sermon. Surely here was a unique personality of which there are today all too few.

Mr. Woodbury bemoaned the fact that he was not a talented painter capable of portraying the soul stirring scene of the Davis Minute Men starting for Concord. Had he lived sufficiently long it would have been balm to his soul to have seen the episode marvelously treated in oils by an Acton resident, Mr. Arthur F. Davis. Of the picture and the artist Rev. Frederick Brooks Noyes writes.[1]

> *"In the Romanesque town library on Acton Common, not far from where the hero sleeps, is a canvas representing the Captain and his company. It is not only a work of art, but a piece of life. It sends the mind back to the great period it interprets. That painting will inevitably displace much biographical writing. It is unflinchingly realistic, even to the shoe buckles worn by this young gunsmith. The longer we gaze on this figure the more we can feel the uncommon influence which his personality had over the Provincial gentry at Concord in that Council of War. The artist, Arthur Fuller Davis, is not a descendant of this hero. Boston born, he came to Acton at the Centennial of the Concord Fight, and has lived here ever since. But he has found the real historical Isaac Davis, and has put the legendary union of the adventurous and mystical into his whole bearing. He has transmitted this outstanding Revolutionist to all who appreciate art. The horror, pathos and glory of the battle are all there. And, moreover, Mr. Davis has made the right choice of the moment to paint. It is the one just before the men reach the King's highway, marching out of the lane that led from their Captain's house. The illusion created by the artist is that Acton men are forever marching to save the day at Concord."*

On this bright morning, under an unflinching leader, bent on a grim and portentous errand, Davis's company set forth, first marching along what is now Hayward road about forty rods, at which point a left turn was made through the barway and into the lane leading through the land now owned by Mr. Howard Reed, thence along the lane as it then existed and past the home of Rev. John Swift (now Mr. Liebfried's) and along the present Maple Ave. to the junction

[1] Rev. Frederick Brooks Noyes, *"The Tell-Tale Tomb"*, p. 13.

with Woodbury Lane. At this point imagine Maple Ave. to continue straight on behind the Library and all the houses on that side of Main Street until it meets Nagog Hill Road at the point where the barn of Mr. Winthrop Richmond now stands. On past the old meeting house they went and down the hill (the present Main Street) to the level ground just below the present laboratory of the Technology Instrument Corporation. Just a few rods beyond the entrance to the laboratory parking lot, through a barway still in existence, went the old road to Concord, around the base of the hill and down into the meadow and across Nashoba Brook by an old stone bridge that was located at just about the point where the present day railroad track crosses the brook. In fact some of the granite blocks supporting the present railroad bridge were taken from the older one over which Davis and his company passed.[1] Thence the line of march went up the slope passing just to the south of the homestead known for many years as the Horace Hosmer place[2], then across the Great Road and along Strawberry Hill to its present junction with Esterbrook Road; thence along Esterbrook Road a few rods to the point where it today turns sharply to the right.[3] At this point in Revolutionary days the highway formed a Y, the left branch passing just to the south of the Brabrook house, and meeting Pope Road as at present.[4] A short distance beyond the Brabrook house, the column took a short cut through the woods to again meet the highway to Concord near the house of Seth Brooks. About seventy five rods beyond they crossed the Concord line and continued on toward the little village of Barrett's Mills as the shortest route to the rendezvous at the North Bridge.

We have two pieces of evidence concerning the progress of the column from this point on. It proceeded to a location somewhat to the rear of Colonel Barrett's house where a halt was called for a short time to observe the movements of a detachment of the enemy which was searching the building and grounds for war supplies. Then, partly by a cross road, and partly over the fields north of Barrett's Mills, a straight course was taken to the Widow Brown's Tavern.[5]

Futhermore Charles Handley stated in a deposition[6] that at the

[1] The old stone bridge which sets out in the meadow about ten rods to the west of the present route 2 at this point is of considerably later date.

[2] The present owners are the Robert Davisons.

[3] The portion of Strawberry Hill Road which at present leads from Esterbrook Road to Pope's Corner, passing to the north of the old Brabrook house, is of much later date. Fletcher (p. 256) writing in 1890 speaks of it as a comparatively new road.

[4] The Brabrook place built 1751 was occupied by Mr. Hammond Taylor about 1890 and for several years thereafter; present owner is Alden Flagg.

[5] Frederic Hudson, *Harpers*, May 1875, p. 790, 1st. column.

[6] See Appendix XII.

time of the Concord Fight he lived at the tavern kept by the Widow Brown, nearly a mile northwest of the North Bridge, and saw Davis' men as they came from Acton. He asserts that, "While on the march they went in files of two abreast. I first saw them coming through the fields north of Barrett's Mills, and they kept to the fields until they came to the road at Mrs. Brown's tavern. They then took the north road leading to the bridge. They marched fast to the tune of a fife and drum. I remember the tune but am not quite sure of its name. I think it was called "The White Cockade".

At this stage of the march the company was at approximately full strength. The official roll as recorded by Coburn on page 173 will be given below but it should be pointed out that it was taken from the Lexington Alarms, XII, 116, and contains one error and omits the names of three known to have been present, namely, Abner Hosmer, James Hayward, and James Fletcher, a boy of sixteen, who appeared with musket and ball and pled successfully to be allowed to accompany the enlisted men on the morning of April 19th. The error lies in the fact that Reuben Law appears as Reuben Low. With these corrections the list of those who served at Concord Bridge under Isaac Davis is as follows:[1]

Isaac Davis, Capt.
James Hayward,
Succeeding Capt.
John Heald, Lt.
David Forbush, 2nd. Lt.
William Macksfield, Sgt.
Oliver Emerson, Sgt.
John Barker, Corp.
David Davis, Corp.
John Davis, Corp.
Joseph Barker
Ephraim Billings
Joseph Chaffin
Elijah Davice
Ezekiel Davis
James Davis
Reuben Davis
Thomas Darby
James Fletcher
Abraham Hapgood
John Harris
Benjamin Hayward
Ebenezer Heald
Abner Hosmer
Jonas Hunt
Simon Hunt, Jr.
William Johnson
Reuben Law
Phillip Piper
Joseph Reed
John Robbins
Stephen Shepherd
Solomon Smith
Samuel Smith
Thomas Thorpe[2]
Moses Wood

[1] The other two Acton companies were (1) Faulkner's company which as has been already mentioned was taken over by Capt. Simon Hunt, of which there is no list, and (2) Capt. Joseph Robbins' company concerning which we have only the following record:

Joseph Robbins, Capt.
Isreal Heald, Officer
Thomas Noyes, Ensign
Robert Chaffin, Officer

[2] Thomas Thorp, a farmer, was the last survivor of Davis' company. He died of old age on October 19, 1849 at the age of 94.

Ebenezer Edwards Abraham Young
Francis Barker, Drummer
Luther Blanchard, Fifer

As Acton's three companies make their respective ways toward the rendezvous let us turn our attention to what was going on to produce the circumstances they encountered upon their arrival. According to the depositions of numerous persons the British column reached Concord between seven and eight o'clock whereupon Lt. Colonel Smith immediately proceeded to carry out the plan of the expedition, namely the destruction of the military stores. Ensign De Bernicre acted as guide since he had been one of the spies sent out for the express purpose of locating them some time previous. Capt. Lawrence Parsons of the 10th Regiment, with six light companies, was dispatched to the North Bridge, distant three quarters of a mile. There he left Capt Walter Lawrie of the 43rd Regiment with three of the companies for guard duty, while he proceeded with the other three, guided by Ensign De Bernicre, over the bridge and up the left bank of the Concord River and its northerly branch the Assabet River, to the home of Colonel Barrett, almost two miles from the North Bridge.[1] Capt. Mundy Pole of the 10th Regiment was sent with a force to the South Bridge for similar guard duty and the destruction of such military stores as might be uncovered.

In the meantime large numbers of Americans were gathering on Punkatasset Hill to the northward beyond the river.[2] Some of these, particularly the companies of Capt. Nathan Barret and Capt. George Minot of Concord, had gone out earlier in the morning to meet the British near Merriam's Corner on the east side of the village but had wisely retired when the vastly superior British command came into sight. They did not wish to repeat the unfortunate episode at Lexington the fresh details of which had just been brought in by breathless and sweating couriers.

Captain Lawrie, who had deployed his grenadiers to the west of the bridge for a limited reconnaissance, was by no means unmindful of the concourse of yeomanry in the vicinity and deemed it wise to concentrate his little command of three companies at the east end of the bridge. In this strategic position he could, if it became necessary, rip up a part of planking and thus make the crossing of the river exceedingly awkward for any appreciable force of his opponents that might seek to enter the town and interfere with the ransacking for stores which was then going on apace.

[1] Diary of De Bernicre.
[2] About 200 ft. higher than the river, and four-fifths of a mile from the bridge. (U.S. Geological Survey, 1943)

Approximately a quarter of a mile beyond the bridge to the west there is a little hill which is some forty feet higher than the river. At about nine o'clock the Americans moved forward from Punkatasset to this little hill, under the command of Col. James Barrett of Concord, and formed their lines under the direction of Adjutant Joseph Hosmer, with the minute companies on the right and the militia on the left, facing the bridge.[1] As these details were going forward, and as the officers were assembling at the request of Col. Barrett, the Acton company under Davis arrived and took its place at the extreme left of the lines as had been arranged on muster days.

There were now assembled[2] four companies from Concord commanded respectively by Capt. David Brown, 52 men; Capt. Charles Miles, 52 men; Capt George Minot, number unknown; and Capt. Nathan Barrett, number unknown. From Acton there were three companies, one under Capt. Isaac Davis, 38 men; one under Capt. Joseph Robbins, number unknown; and one under Capt. Simon Hunt, number unknown.[3] There were two companies from Bedford, one being under Capt. John Moore, 51 men, and one under Capt. Jonathan Wilson, 28 men. The Lincoln company under Capt. William Smith had 62 men.

In addition to these regularly enlisted soldiers, militia and minute men who had received at least the rudiments of military drill, there were certain free-lance individuals of all ages who for multifarious reasons couldn't or wouldn't sign up and attend regular muster They were not averse, however, to risking their lives to take a pot-shot at the redcoats if it became the style of the day.

In the presence of these hardy and determined volunteers, freinds and acquaintances for the most part, but on this particular morning resolute and grim warriors with homes and principles at stake, Colonel Barrett convened the first council of war of the Revolution. It was a momentous occasion which could never be repeated. Opinion was divided. It was agreed that the Americans now had sufficient man power to repulse the small force under Capt. Lawrie but once the bridge was forced it meant pursuing them into the town and engaging the whole command there under Col. Smith. Some advised awaiting more of the reinforcements which were coming in steadily. Across the river stood the professional soldiers of Great Britian; men to whom war was a business; men who though small in number at the specific instant nevertheless were backed by the might of the British empire. But also across the river lay Concord from which by now

[1] See Coburn, page 80, note 1.

[2] See depositions of Capt. Barrett and fifteen others in *Journals of each Provincial Congress in Mass.*, p. 672.

[3] Statement of Aaron Jones, a member of the company, in Adam's speech, page 21.

there arose the smoke of fires newly kindled; also across the river stood Lexington, at that moment mourning over the corpses slain on its common. The only possible decision to which the council could arrive was, "To march into the middle of the town for its defence, or die in the attempt".[1]

Forthwith Colonel Barrett gave the order to Major John Buttrick to lead an advance over the bridge and into the village, instructing him as had Capt. Parker a few hours before, — not to fire unless fired upon.

It was then between nine and ten o'clock.[2] Colonel Barrett retired to the rear on higher ground,[3] and Major Buttrick hastened to execute the order. His choice for a company to lead was naturally one from Concord but the captain of the one designated replied that he would rather not. In any event it is now a matter of inescapeable record that Buttrick turned to Davis and asked him if he was afraid to go, to which he responded promptly, "No, I am not; and I haven't a man that is".[4]

He immediately gave the command to march, and the men of Acton wheeled from the left of the line to the right, and with Barker and Blanchard once more playing his favorite tune, he led his company down the hillside and along the causeway to the bridge.

Apropos of this act no paragraph can be more potent than that in the impassioned speech of Rev. Woodbury in his appeal before the Massachusetts legislature, without which the imposing monument on Acton Common would not exist. In that address he said,[5]

> *Davis' case is without parallel and was considered by the Legislature and Congress when they granted aid to his widow. There never can be another. There can be but one man who headed the first column of attack on the King's troops in the Revolutionary war, and Isaac Davis was that man. Others fell, but not exactly as he fell. Give them the marble. Vote them the monument, one that shall speak to all future generations and speak to the terror of kings and to the encouragement of all who will be free and who, when the bloody crisis comes to strike for it, "are not afraid to go."*

Major John Buttrick of Concord led in person this little army down the slope toward the river but not until he had offered the command to a superior officer who happened to be present, namely Lt. Col. John Robinson of Westford. Robinson lived in Westford and

[1] Survivors testified that both Buttrick and Davis used the same words. See Ripley's *History of Concord Fight.*
[2] Journal of Capt. David Brown of Concord.
[3] Ripley.
[4] Depositions of Bradley Stone and Solomon Smith. Appendix XII.
[5] Fletcher, page 261, col. 1.

had responded to the alarm. This honor he did not accept but he did ask that he might march by Buttrick's side, which request was graciously granted.

Then in column by twos came Davis and his company, followed by the Concord company under Capt. Charles Miles; then two more Concord companies under Capt. David Brown and Capt. Nathan Barrett. The Acton company commanded by Simon Hunt then fell in, followed by the companies from Bedford and Lincoln and the remaining company from Acton.[1]

The causeway, which was low and always submerged at moderate flood waters, was wet in places. It formed an angle, the first side leading toward the south, the second turning eastward toward the bridge. Just as the head of the column rounded the vertex of the angle the British began to tear up the planking according to Capt. Lawrie's previous design. Major Buttrick shouted to them to desist, whereupon they left the bridge and hastily formed for action at the easterly approach. The American advance continued with deliberation and when they were about ten rods from the west end of the bridge the first sound of a gun in the Battle of Concord was heard. A few desultory shots followed by a volley came from the British and Solomon Smith, a member of Davis' company saw where a ball struck the river on his right.[2]

Without sign of a pause the march continued. At this stage of events Davis inquired as to whether the grenadiers were using ammunition. In reply Blanchard indicated that he had been hit and remarked[3] "If it had gone an inch further one way it would have killed me, and if an inch in the opposite direction it would not have hit me at all." Realizing that first blood had been drawn and that no longer was a peaceful entry into the town possible Major Buttrick shouted, "Fire, For God's sake fire!"

[1] A letter written by Amasa Piper, now in the possession of Mrs. Stuart Allen, when he was sixty seven, tells how thrilled he was as a teen aged boy to witness the events at Concord Bridge.

[2] First deposition of Solomon Smith, Appendix XII.

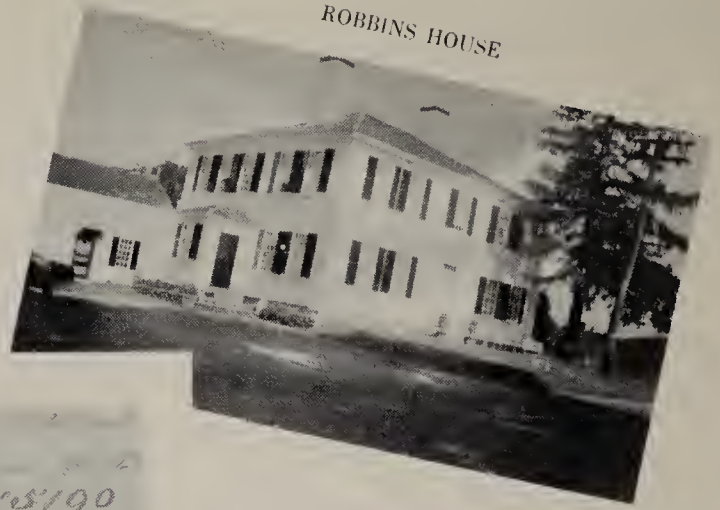
[3] Fletcher is in error when he leaves the impression on page 256 that Blanchard died that night in a hospital in Cambridge. On April 24th twenty three men from Acton enlisted for the siege of Boston and were placed with Lincoln soldiers in a company commanded by Capt. William Smith of Lincoln and assigned to the regiment of Col. John Nixon. Blanchard's name appears among the men in that company accredited to Acton. Furthermore his name appears on the roll of Smith's company of Nixon's regiment as of August 1, 1775. In addition, in a notation dated Sept. 30, 1775, Luther Blanchard, Corporal, of Smith's company of Nixon's regiment, belonging to Acton, is reported as deceased. (See State Archives, vol. 56, page 28.)

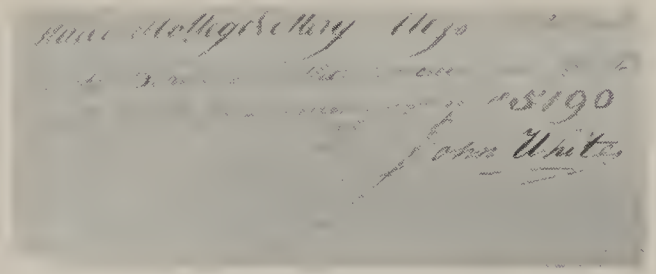
The final paragraph of Hudson's *Memorial to Luther Blanchard* makes it amply clear that he died in Cambridge in the early autumn of 1775 as a result of the wound received at Concord Bridge, even though it at first appeared inconsequential and despite the fact that for several weeks he performed fully his duties as a soldier.

CONANT HOUSE



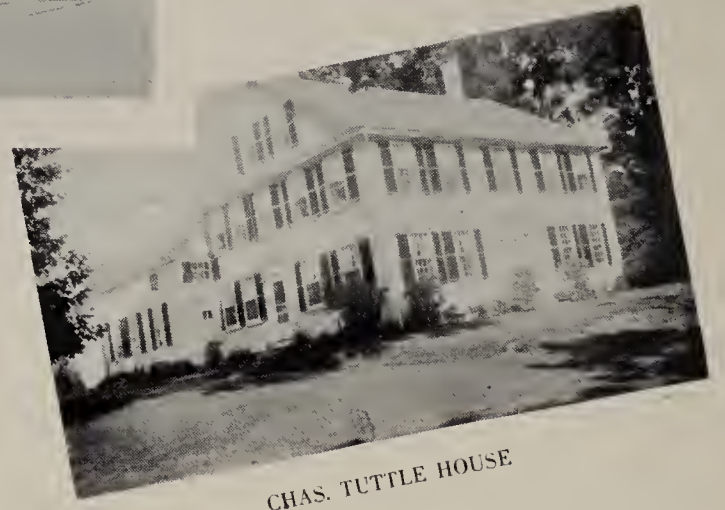
ROBBINS HOUSE







HOSMER HOUSE



CHAS. TUTTLE HOUSE

LOTTERY HOUSES



SECOND MEETING HOUSE, 1807
From pencil sketch by A. F. Davis

The order was promptly obeyed. The British responded, killing Capt. Davis by a shot through the heart just as he was taking aim. Abner Hosmer fell simultaneously with a bullet through the head.[1] Ezekiel Davis, brother of Isaac was wounded as was also Joshua Brooks of Lincoln.[2] The first American volley had killed one British private and wounded several others, including lieutenants Hull, Gould, Kelley, and Sutherland.

The Americans continued across the bridge and the British gave way and retreated toward the center of Concord. When they were almost there they were met by reinforcements consisting of two or three companies under Col. Smith himself, who had come in response to a request for immediate assistance sent by Capt. Lawrie before a shot was fired at the bridge. Mr. Emerson in his account tells of the "great fickleness and inconstancy of mind" of the British at this stage of events, and relates how they marched and countermarched for half an hour. One can hardly blame them for nervousness since part of their force was still at the south bridge and at least five hundred angry and aroused provincials now lay between them and the rest of their force still out at Col. Barrett's.

With the death of Davis and the crossing of the bridge all semblance of military discipline likewise ceased among the Americans. Thomas Thorp of Davis' company stated in a subsequent deposition[3] that, "Our company and most of the others pursued but in great disorder" and Solomon Smith asserted that, "The loss of our captain was the cause of much confusion that followed."[4] At this specific time the pursuit of the British continued only for a furlong or so. Due to military inexperience the Americans halted on the east side of the road to the rear of the Elisha Jones house (still standing). Furthermore they paid no attention to the contingent in their rear. Presumably it was the idea that when the British were reinforced they would return to the attack and that the position behind the Jones house, with a good stone wall as a breastworks, was a decided advantage in such

[1] A run-of-the-mine historical novel entitled "Concord Bridge", a sort of apoligia for British general Gage, written by Mr. Howard Horne and published in 1952 by Bobbs-Merrill Co., gives some erroneous ideas of events at the bridge. The author sticks to the truth in stating that Davis led the attack upon the British and was first to be killed but departs radically when he confuses Abner Hosmer with Francis Barker and asserts that Acton's only other casualty was a fifteen year old drummer boy. The facts are that the Acton drummer, Francis Barker, had just turned nineteen and was entirely unscathed in the engagement and died in his fifties. Abner Hosmer would have been twenty the following August.

The extremes to which some writers can go is best illustrated by a magazine article published in August of 1953 which had the British entering Concord from Lexington via the North Bridge and also had Buttrick and Davis going about picking up the dead and wounded sometime after noon.

[2] Ancestor of Rev. Frederick Brooks Noyes.

[3] See first deposition of Thomas Thorp; Appendix XII.

[4] See the first deposition of Solomon Smith; ibid.

case. Col. Smith, however, likewise understood the situation and turned his troops back to the center of the village.

Thereupon several of the minute men repaired to the North Bridge and carried the bodies of Isaac Davis and Abner Hosmer to the home of Major Buttrick.[1] Later in the day they were conveyed to Acton. Blanchard in the meantime had had his wound dressed at the home of Humphrey Barrett and had returned to the pursuit of the British.

Shortly after ten o'clock Col. Smith had reassembled his entire command in Concord village. He was seventeen miles from Boston with a force of weary soldiers, most of whom had had no sleep the previous night. They had been subjected to high mental tension, had seen their comrades wounded and killed, and must return under the attack of a constantly augmented and determined enemy.[2]

At approximately noon Col. Smith gave the order to begin the return to Charlestown. At first all went well. The march along the Lexington road for a mile or more to Merriam's Corner was uneventful, but at that point the struggle was renewed. The pursuers, who had been moving along parallel to the line of march but hidden from view by the long ridge to the north of the highway, came within easy musket range of the enemy. In addition some score or more of fresh American companies, too late for the engagements of the earlier part of the day but ready and willing to get into the fray at the first opportunity, came upon the scene at this point. These were the men from Billerica, Chelmsford, Framingham, Reading, Sudbury, Woburn, and Westford, eleven hundred and forty seven in all, who, had arrived as soon as humanly possible from their more remote locations.

Even before this serious addition to his misfortunes, Lt. Col. Smith had realized that his command was in for a grim retreat. In consequence he threw out strong flanking parties on either side of the line of march. It was due to this precaution, and the ignorance of the American soldiers, that most of the Provincial casualties of the day resulted. Time after time, as the yeomanry knelt behind ledges and walls, they were killed or wounded from the rear by these flankers, and because green troops were coming in by the score all along the line of march there were always those who had not been told of the

[1] Second deposition of Solomon Smith; Appendix XII.

[2] Among the papers of the Marquis of Rockingham recently opened to historians is a manuscript copy of a letter sent to England from Boston dated April 23, 1775. The signature has been purposely cancelled beyond recognition for reasons unknown. In the body of the letter appears the following significant sentence. "The Enthusiastic zeal with which those people behaved must convince every reasonable man what a difficult and unpleasant task General Gage has before him, even Weamin had firelocks, one was seen to fire a Blunder bus between her Father and Husband from their windows; there they three with an Infant Child soon suffered the fury of the day." *William and Mary Quarterly*, January 1953, page 106.

dangerous technique of the enemy.

On the easterly slope of Fiske Hill, well inside the town line of Lexington, stood the farmhouse of Benjamin Fiske. As the British marched past the house they were exhausted and in ill humor. They had been severely mauled all the way up the long westerly approach to the summit and they could see gathering ahead of them the minute men of Lexington, grim from the events of the early morning, waiting on the equally long slope of Concord Hill. This they must climb in the dust and heat; and beyond lay Lexington village. The prospect was dismal and the men were desperate.

The stragglers from the British column had entered the Fiske House for pillage. The entire family had fled. James Hayward, even though exempt because of his dismembered foot, had followed thus far and had stepped into the yard to obtain a drink at the well. One Briton, who had lingered longer than the rest, emerged from the house and, perceiving Hayward to be an enemy, raised his gun and exclaimed, "You are a dead man!"

"And so are you", replied Hayward. Both men fired and both fell, the Britisher killed instantly and Hayward mortally wounded, the ball piercing his powder horn[1] and carrying with it the splinters into his side. He lived eight hours and was conscious to the last. His father, Deacon Samuel Hayward, had time to reach Lexington and comfort him with conversation and prayer. He warned his son that he would doubtless be a corpse by the morrow and desired to know if he were sorry that he had marched forth with the minute men in the morning. The reply has been handed down to us through the generations and the words are those of a soldier and a Christian:[2]

> *"Father, hand me my powder horn and bullet pouch. I started with one pound of powder and forty balls, you see what is left, (he had used all but two or three,) you se what I have been about. I never did such a forenoon's work before. Tell mother not to mourn too much for me for I am not sorry I turned out. I die willingly for my country. She will now, I doubt not, by the help of God, be free. And tell whom I loved better than my mother, you know who I mean, that I am not sorry. I shall never see her again. May I meet her in heaven."*

Thus died the Acton schoolmaster, the crippled hero of the first battle of the Revolution, who walked five miles in the glow of the morning to be at Concord Bridge, and almost six miles more to receive his mortal wound in the heat of the afternoon.

[1] The powder horn with the hole in it now reposes among the relics in the Acton Library.

[2] Fletcher, p. 257.

This ends the commonly recorded history of the Acton men in the day's events. For the sake of completeness, however, it should be pointed out that the conflict was by no means over and most Acton men participated in it. This is certainly true of Blanchard and many others who went all the way to Cambridge.[1]

The British straggled into Lexington, a beaten and demoralized mass of sweating and parched humanity where they were met by reinforcements under Earl Percy.[2] Legend has it that some of the men lay on their bellies in the road and drank from the puddles.[3] Percy pillaged and burned the town to a considerable degree and his soldiers, who had not been under fire thus far, were guilty of several needless killings of non-combatants. Eventually the whole force set out for Boston convinced that the yokels had had enough, and were thoroughly cowed. They were shortly to discover, however, that from the point of view of bloodletting the worst was yet to come. As they marched through Menotomy (now Arlington) they were set upon by some eighteen[4] hundred fresh rebels at a place called "Foot-of-the Rocks" where they suffered the greatest casualties of the day.

At about five o'clock Percy marched out of Arlington and at sunset was dragging his chastened command forward at about the location of Union Square, Somerville. He describes the gunfire as incessant. As they toiled up Bunker Hill they could[5] look back in the gathering dusk to the top of Winter Hill a mile away and witness three hundred more Americans just arriving from Salem under Col. Timothy Pickering. As the sun went down that April evening it was never to rise again on Middlesex County under kingly rule.[6]

Quite apart from the military debacle of the one day campaign of April 19th the primary objective, namely the destruction of stores of war, was successful to only a very limited degree. The cannon

[1] First deposition of Thomas Thorp; Appendix XII.

[2] Between two and three o'clock. Coburn p. 121.

[3] Handed down in the Reed family as reported by Joseph Reed of Davis' company.

[4] These were the men from Watertown, Medford, Malden, Roxbury, Dedham, Needham, Lynn, Menotomy, Charlestown and Newton. See Coburn, page 134, for details.

[5] The sun set at seven o'clock on April 19, 1775. See Low's Almanack, Boston, 1775.

[6] British casualties for the day: 1 lieutenant killed; 2 Lt. Cols. wounded; 2 Captains wounded; 9 lieutenants wounded; 1 lieutenant missing; 2 ensigns wounded; 1 serganet killed, 7 wounded, 2 missing; 1 drummer killed, 1 wounded; 62 rank and file killed, 157 wounded, 24 missing.
American casualties: 49 killed, wounded 42; missing 5. Coburn, pages 157-58.

Note: A modern mystery story, *Hardly a Man is now Alive*, by Herbert Brean, William Morrow & Co., New York, 1950, largely about Concord Fight, contains a fictitious character named Joseph Wilder of Acton. No Wilders appear in the town records. The author may have had in the mind the Wilde family which had two representatives named Joseph but both were born after the Revolution.

had been previously hidden in Stow and Groton and Acton and the diverse other supplies were distributed throughout these same and other neighboring towns to such an extent that the sum total found by the British was negligible. Moreover, of the portion they did not burn and tried to carry with them on the retreat, a considerable amount was abandoned during the latter part of the day as haste became paramount.

The several towns that had been unfortunate enough to lose sons in the engagement attended within the next few days the funerals of their beloved dead. On the faces of the mourners the lines of grim determination were wet with the tears of resentment. Among the solemn corteges wending their ways over the highways of the county was that in Acton enroute to the three open graves in the old burying ground where the bodies of Davis, Hayward and Hosmer were laid among the bones of their fathers there to remain for three quarters of a century until carried in honor to a more noble and befitting resting place under the great granite shaft on the town common.

Very naturally the news of the bloodshed of April 19th spread throughout the colonies like wildfire and the reaction of the populace was immediate. Broadsides such as the one shown herewith were struck off almost before the smoke had cleared away and were plastered on walls and buildings for unbelieveable distances. This particular broadside, which was written up in the Saturday Evening Post of June 15, 1929, was sixteen inches by twenty two inches. The forty black coffins that emblazoned the masthead were memorials to the dead and above each was printed the name of the one killed. Those dedicated to the men of Acton were the last three at the right end of the top row. In the haste to get out the broadside, however, the printers neglected to obtain the first name of Abner Hosmer and the name J. Howard appears in the place of James Hayward.

Broadsides were not, however, the full fruit of the British march to Concord. Scarcely were the burial obsequies concluded before enlistees appeared by the score for the defense of the Province. Of these twenty three were from Acton. They were mustered in on April 24th and allotted to Capt. William Smith's company of Col. John Nixon's regiment. They acquitted themselves well under very heavy fighting at Bunker Hill. The list of Acton men is given below;[1]

John Heald, Lieutenant,
Oliver Emerson, Sergeant,
Moses Woods, Sergeant,
John Davis, Corporal,
Stephen Shepherd, Corporal,
Luther Blanchard, Corporal,
Francis Barker. Drummer
Ephraim Billings, Private,
Joseph Chaffin, Private,
David Davis, Private,

[1] *Mass. Archives*, volume labelled eight months service, No. 39.

James Fletcher, Private,
Jonas Hunt, Private,
Andrew Law, Private,
John Oliver, Private,
Joseph Reed, Private,
Solomon Smith, Private,
Jonathan Stratten, Private,
Thomas Thorp, Private,
Samuel Temple, Private,
William Thomas, Private,
Abram Young, Private,
John Barker, Private,
James Law, Private,

In the meantime the civilian affairs of the town had to go on as usual insofar as was possible under the circumstances. On May 16th the question of maintaining a women's school was propounded but no action was taken. The meeting, did, however, elect Josiah Hayward to represent the town in the Provincial Congress.

On November 7, 1775 the town lost its first and most beloved pastor, Rev. John Swift, who had served long and well since 1738. In consequence of his demise a special town meeting was convened on December 11th and it was voted that Francis Faulkner, Dea. Joseph Brabrook, and Dea. Samuel Hayward be a committee to provide preaching and that in the meantime a Rev. Mr. Sprague supply the pulpit until the May meeting.

At the same meeting Lt. John Heald, Ephraim Hosmer, Capt. Simon Hunt, Dea. Joseph Brabrook and Capt. John Robbins were chosen as a committee of correspondence, inspection and safety. It should be noted that two new functions had been added to the original duties of this group. Whereas at first such men were selected to keep the town in touch with the march of political events they were now expected to look to the safety of the community and to check on subversive moves from within.

On December 20th the Province began to plan seriously for a long campaign. Among other items we find Acton being required to provide one ton of English hay[1] as part of a general assessment wherein Concord was to furnish five tons, Lincoln three tons and Littleton one ton, at a price of five pounds per ton. About two weeks later the quota for blankets was Littleton and Acton ten each,[2] Concord twenty, Stow eleven, and Groton eighteen. In addition those who reenlisted were to receive a penny per mile to and from camp.[3] Furthermore an act was passed to raise 4368 men to reinforce the Continental Army until the following April according to a plan which demanded thirteen from Acton, twenty four from Chelmsford, twenty three from Westford, fourteen from Littleton, and seventeen from Stow.[4]

[1] *Acts and Resolves of the Province of Mass.*, vol. XIX, p. 178
[2] *ibid.* p. 197.
[3] *ibid.* p. 205
[4] *ibid.* p. 219

Through the winter of 1775-76 the Rev. Mr. Sprague preached according to the agreement made the previous autumn but at the annual meeting held on May 14, 1776 it was voted that the town should hear four candidates for the ministry and that each candidate should preach for four Sundays. As a committee to secure the candidates Dea. Samuel Hayward, Francis Faulkner, Nathaniel Edwards, and Lt. John Heald were selected. They were instructed, "to procure the said gentlemen and take advice of the president of the college and neighboring ministers as to who the candidates shall be".

At the same meeting it was voted to raise thirty two pounds for a reading and writing school but in addition it was permitted that each district or society might spend up to thirty shillings for a "woamans' " school should it desire to do so.

During these months the subject of complete independence had raised its head among the Boston group led by Samuel Adams and once raised it was not allowed to languish for lack of support from men of his turn of mind. However little this objective had been envisioned at the beginning of strained relations with the mother country it was certainly out in the open by the spring of 1776. Acton was immediately agreeable to the idea. At a special town meeting held on June 14th, 1776 it was propounded whether the town would instruct its representative to give consent in the name of his constituents that the colonies be made independent of Great Britain whenever the Continental Congress should think proper to declare the same. The vote was heavily in the affirmative and the following is a copy of the record:

> *"It was propounded whether the Town will give Instructions to the Representative voted in the affirmative and the following Instructions were given to Mr. Mark White, Sr. our not Being favored with the Resolution of the Hon. House of Representatives Calling upon the Several Towns in this Colony to Express their minds with Respect to the Important Question of American Independence is the Ocation of our not Expressing our minds Sooner but we now Chearfully Imbrace this Oppertunity to Instruct you on that Important Question the Subverting our Constitution the many Injuries and Unheard of Barbarities which these Colonies have Received from Grate Bretain Confirms us in the Opinion that the Present age will be Defitiant in their Duty to God their Posterity and themselves if they Do not Establish an American Republic, this is the only form of Government we wish to Se Established but we mean not to Dictate we freely Submit this Interesting affair to the Wisdom of the Hon. Continantle Congress whom we*

Trust are Guided and Directed in these Important affairs by the Supreme Governor of the world and we Instruct you Sir to Give them the Strongest Assurance that if they Should Declare America to be a free and Independent Republick your Constituants will support and Defend the Measure with their Lives and fortunes."

Despite the circumlocution of the above statement, and despite the faulty spelling of the scribe who made the copy, the foregoing bears the certain imprint of sincerity and of a staunch manhood that knew its own mind and was aware of the cost in blood and treasure which might be entailed.

Many years later Daniel Webster was to recall this action to Governor George S. Boutwell in a letter written from his home in Marshfield on October 16, 1851.[1]

"The resolutions of the town of Acton on the 14th of June, 1776, are very remarkable. The general idea of some union among the several colonies, each acting under a separate government, is known, of course, to have prevailed before. The meeting in Albany, in 1753, is proof of this, and other evidences also, to the like effect are spread through our history. But the 480 inhabitants of Acton, with a far-seeing sagacity, by the resolutions referred to, carried their opinions much further, to a much more important result. They appear to have contemplated not a confederacy, or league between the states, but one government, that is to say, an American republic for them all."

As Webster so clearly states, the document of June 14, 1776 mentioned above should command the attention of all residents of Acton. It is one of the town's most impressive actions in matters of politics. It forever places Acton in the forefront of those who were alert enough to foresee the great republic that this nation has become.

Less than a month later while Jefferson and others were sweating out the first days of July in Philadelphia in the attempt to formulate the Declaration of Independence the Province of Massachusetts was voting to increase the price to be be paid for firearms[2] in the attempt to encourage their manufacture and Acton was holding a town meeting[3] to vote on a single article, namely,

"To see how much money the town will raise to give those men that shall inlist themselves in Col. Jonathan Reed's regiment bound for Canady and Shall Pass muster

[1] Daniel Webster, *Writings and Speeches* (National ed.) - 167 XVIII, 479-80. Webster is in error in citing the population of Acton as 480. The Provincial Census of 1776 set it at 769.

[2] *Acts and Resolves of Massachusetts Province*, vol. XIX, p. 499.

[3] July 3, 1776.

and pass any vote or votes Relating to the Excusing Persons that served in the Last Campain or anything relating to the above affair."

After considering the article the town voted to add the amount of six pounds, six shillings and eight pence to the sum already allotted by the General Court and to raise by the same amount the remuneration to Lt. John Heald, Jr. provided he joined the regiment and went with the Acton men. It was further voted that a committee be chosen to "make allowance for those men that have been personally in the army or have hired men to go so as to excuse them from paying their proportion of the above bounty insofar as what they have done will be a sufficient sum therefore." It was further voted that the aforementioned committee consist of the selectmen together with Dea. Samuel Hayward and Capt. Joseph Robbins.

Some such committee was necessary since the levy of 4368 men demanded by the Province during the previous December had been followed by another of 5000 in June to offset the influx of Hessians hired by the British. In this latter draft Acton had a quota of 22 men, Westford 27, Chelmsford 34, Littleton 23, and Stow 24.[1]

In the excited state of the popular mind town meetings were frequently called when only one or two questions were to be considered. On July 22nd, 1776, for instance it was voted to pay a bonus to any five men who would enlist for the expedition. At the same meeting Capt. Simon Hunt asked to be excused from serving on the committee of correspondence and Lt. Thomas Noyes was appointed in his place. On August 29th the only business to come before a special town meeting was the matter of securing a preacher. Apparently one of the candidates, Rev. Moses Adams, was creating a favorable impression since the decision was to the effect that he be requested to preach for eight additional Sabbaths.

On October 24, 1776 a proposition was brought before the town to the effect that the executive and legislative branches of the Provincial government should frame a state constitution. Francis Faulkner, Simon Tuttle, Ephraim Hapgood, Dea. Samuel Hayward, Ephraim Hosmer, Capt. Joseph Robbins, and Nathaniel Edwards were chosen as a committee to shape the draft of the following resolutions which were unanimously accepted:

1. *Resolved that as this State is at present destitute of an established form of Government, it is necessary one should be immediately formed and established.*

2. *Resolved that the Supreme Legislature in that capacity are by no means a body proper to form and establish a constitution for the following reasons, viz:*

[1] *Acts and Resolves of Mass.*, vol. XIX, p. 462.

Because a constitution properly formed has a system of principles established to secure subjects in the possession of their rights and privileges against any encroachments of the Legislative part, and it is our opinion that the same body which has a right to form a constitution has a right to alter it, and we conceive a constitution alterable by the Supreme Legislative power is no security to the subjects against the encroachments of that power on our rights and privileges.

Resolved that the town thinks it expedient that a convention be chosen by the inhabitants of the several towns and districts in this State being free to form and establish a constitution for the State.

Resolved that the Honorable Assembly of this State be desired to recommend to the inhabitants of the State to choose a convention for the above purpose as soon as possible.

Resolved that the Convention publish their proposed constitution before they establish it for the inspection and remarks of the Inhabitant of the State.

At a town meeting held December 20, 1776 it was voted to hear Mr. Moses Adams four more Sundays. Apparently his address and ability met with approval since on the following January 15th it was further voted that "the town Concur with the Church in making choice of Mr. Moses Adams to take Charge over this Church and Congregation to minister to them in Holy things". It would appear that in this meeting there was some difference of opinion because the record goes on to say that it was decided that each man write aye or nay on his ballot and sign his name. Furthermore it is noteworthy that here for the first time the words "church" and "congregation" appear specifically in the records. In addition a committee was chosen to settle upon and suggest a proper salary. Here again there must have been high feeling since the meeting was three times adjourned without agreement. Finally on March 17, 1777, it was decided that Mr. Adams be given two hundred pounds as settlement and eighty pounds lawful money salary plus firewood for the first year.

The above decision was certainly not hasty since the townspeople had now listened to the candidate for a total of sixteen sermons in all. Mr. Adams accepted the call and on the 25th of June the ordination ceremonies took place. This had been arranged at a special meeting on May 26th at which time it was voted that the town unite with the church in the ordination. The committee in charge of the events of the day was composed of Samuel Jones, Lt. Billing, Ephraim

Hapgood, Simon Tuttle and Samuel Piper.

Mr. Adams, like Mr. Swift before him, was a native of Framingham. He was born October 16, 1749, and was graduated from Harvard in 1771. He was the only child of respectable but humble parents both of whom died in the same year leaving him an orphan at the age of seven. The property left to him was sufficient, with economy, to defray the expense of a public education. The first years of his ministry were attended with considerable pecuniary embarrassment since although precaution was taken to pay his salary in silver, nevertheless the value of that compared to the necessities of life decreased very considerably due to the war inflation. At the same time the town, struggling under the attempt to meet the requests of the government for support of hostilities, found it difficult to meet its agreement with respect to the settlement of Mr. Adams. The matter of the arrears was the subject of debate at three town meetings. The final decision was to pay the balance in full.

This settlement money had been relied upon to provide for the erection of a house for the new minister, which a young and growing family rendered a necessity. This edifice, known as the "old parsonage" at the turn of the century, still stands in good repair just down the hill a few rods from the present school house, on the west side of Nagog Hill Road. It was completed in 1780. To augment the pastor's salary, which was during the war years usually in arrears, Mrs. Adams, a very energetic and capable lady and notable housekeeper, maintained a store in addition to the duties incident upon the rearing of three sons and three daughters.

In this residence Mr. Adams lived for forty two years until the time of his death on October 13, 1819. Here he prepared the four thousand sermons delivered during his long stewardship and here he lived a life that earned for him the respect, veneration and love of his parishioners.

As the war dragged on with only here and there events that were heartening for the cause of liberty the towns found the raising of enlistment quotas an ever-increasing burden. On March 10, 1777 the annual meeting took under consideration the following article, "To see what bounty the town will give those men that shall enlist themselves in the Continental Army to complete the quota of men for this town for three years or during the present war, also to see if the town will agree to make an average in the town of what has been done in personal service or by hiring men for the public service during the present war and pass any votes that may be thought proper when met relating to the above affair." On this question it was decided to grant a bounty of twenty pounds to every man that

had enlisted since the first Monday of the month or should enlist within a week of the date of the meeting. It was further voted that Francis Faulkner, Dea. Samuel Hayward, Lt. John Heald, Ephraim Hosmer, Capt. Joseph Robbins, Dea. Joseph Brabrook, Lt. Ephraim Hapgood, Lt. Thomas Noyes, Nathaniel Edwards, Capt. Simon Hunt, Simon Tuttle, Capt. Isreal Heald, Joseph Barker, and Lt. Benjamin Brabrook constitute a committee to collect the data concerning the war service of the town.

Apparently even this liberal inducement did not bring satisfactory results since at a later meeting in May the bonus was raised to twenty four pounds. In part inflation was the cause of this necessity as well as reluctance of men to respond.

As a matter of interest it may be mentioned that at this point in the town records (on page 283 of volume 1) there appears a copy in full of the Declaration of Independence. It is done in the excellent handwriting of Francis Faulkner and it is characteristic of the man that he would spend the time and effort to record for all time a document which in his estimation was so supremely worthy of preservation. Furthermore he was the type of citizen who would feel that as town clerk it was his solemn duty to make the copy so that it might be available for reference at any future time.

In autumn of 1777 the town took up the matter of aid to the families of soldiers serving in the war. In the light of present day practices the decision reached would seem very harsh and would provide ample political ammunition for hungry candidates seeking office. In any event the vote was a decided nay on an article proposing that the town support the families of those men who had enlisted in the Continental Army for the term of three years.

In the early part of 1778 the question of a perpetual union of the states had reached a stage where it was necessary for the citizens to arrive at a conclusion in the matter. Accordingly on the 13th of February Acton voted itself agreeable to the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union as proposed by the Congress. In order that there should be ample room for deliberation this action was taken only after two complete readings of all the material under consideration.

At the March meeting of 1778 Jonathan Billing, after thirty-nine years of faithful service as town treasurer, declined the office and Simon Tuttle was elected in his stead. This is but the first instance of a good old Acton custom, namely, the keeping in office of men of ability and integrity so long as inclination and health permit them to serve the town well. It is a custom that persists even up to the present regardless of party lines or the attempts of erstwhile politicians to thrust their way into town affairs.

By May of 1778 inflation had so far taken hold of events that the bounty for enlistment had risen to one hundred and thirty pounds for nine months service. While the signs had been discernable to the alert among the financeers and merchants for several months this was the first recorded evidence of a definite plunge in the value of the currency.

A little less than two weeks later, on May 25th, the committee previously chosen to study the war service of the town made its report which was accepted as given below.

> *"To the four men sent to the Rhode Island area for two and a quarter months the sum of six pounds per man; to the four men sent to the Northern Army from August to December* 24 *pounds each; to the four men sent to the Northern Army for six weeks in October and November* 9 *pounds each; to the four men sent to Cambridge for* 5 *months from November to April* 12 *pounds each; to the four men sent to Cambridge three months from April to July* 7 *pounds* 10 *shillings each."*

At the same meeting the town for the first time in its existence raised the sum of one hundred pounds for the support of the schools. There was added to this vote the permission that each society might spend as much of its share as it saw fit on a women's school.

In June of 1778 a committee consisting of William Barker, Daniel Davis, Ephraim Hosmer, Thomas Noyes, John Adams, John Hayward and John Hunt was chosen to hire men for the public service at such times as the town might be called upon to provide the same. At the same time twenty pounds was allowed for each of five men who would engage for the service in Rhode Island.

About a month later, July 22, 1777, the town voted to reimburse all those who had hired substitutes for service in the Continental Army.

At a town meeting convened on October 6, 1778 the town had under consideration, among other things, this strange article:

> *"To see if the town will agree to build a house or hut for John Kennedy and his family to live in."*

On this unusual proposition it was voted to build for the public use a house thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide, containing two rooms. A committee consisting of Seth Brooks, Daniel Sheperd, Daniel Davis, Samuel Piper and Nathan Parlin was chosen to provide the materials and choose the place of its location. The action just described immediately raises the query as to whether the building mentioned was supposed to function as a poor house of sorts Certainly the town had no intention of launching forth on a program of erecting shelter for each indigent family. On the other

hand a house of the dimensions described could not possibly serve to accomodate all the town's poor. The question must needs go unanswered since nowhere in the record does the matter appear. We do not even know that it was ever built, and if built there is no mention of the site.

Mention has already been made of the settlement of Rev. Moses Adams and the financial difficulties he experienced at the outset of his ministry. On January 25, 1779 the citizens met to

> *"See if the town will agree to pay the Rev. Mr. Adams any sum of money to enable him to purchase some land and build him a dwelling house (the price of land and buildings have arisen to that degree since the town voted him two hundred pounds settlement that he is unable to build himself a dwelling house without some consideration from the town) and pass any other votes that may be thought proper."*

In this connection it was voted to make the two hundred pounds that was given to Mr. Adams in settlement as good in lands and buildings as that money would have purchased at the time it was granted. A committee composed of Francis Faulkner, Capt. Joseph Robbins, Dea. Samuel Hayward, Seth Brooks, Lt. Thomas Noyes, Lt. Ephraim Hapgood and Lt. Daniel Davis was chosen to assist the minister in purchasing land and buildings to the value of the settlement.

At the March meeting of 1779 the town entertained the first petition from certain residents desiring to be set off as a separate town and voted that the selectmen be a committee to oppose "the setting off of a town or district east of the Groton Road so called". In modern parlance this means that all that portion of Acton east of the Great Road (route 2) would now be a portion of another town, in fact Carlisle, as events subsequently developed.

At the same meeting a committee consisting of Samuel Hayward, Josiah Hayward, Lt. Billing, William Cutting and Daniel Davis was chosen to provide for the families of those soldiers serving in the Continental Army "agreeable to the law". This reversal of position from that taken in 1777 seems to imply that the state had passed an act making the care of soldier dependents obligatory.

The matter of inflation reared its head again in diverse ways as the year 1779 elapsed. At the May meeting the school budget was raised to two hundred and forty pounds; the widow Hannah Davis (wife of Capt. Isaac) was excused from taxes; and on July 26th it was voted to concur with the convention held at Concord shortly before respecting the regulation of prices on the necessaries of life. Francis Faulkner, Capt. Robbins, Mark White, Deacon Brabrook,

Dea. Hayward, John Brooks and Lt. Noyes were chosen as a committee to serve for the purpose. In addition on August 30th the town voted to make good to Rev. Adams his salary for the current year according to the following necessities of life, namely grain, pork, beef, farming labor, sheep wool and flax. It was also decided that the selectmen together with Capt. Joseph Robbins, Dea. Samuel Hayward, Dea. Brabrook and Lt. Jonathan Billing constitute a committee to compute the salary on the Christmas day next following.

By the autumn of 1779 the city of Boston was so hard pressed that an appeal for succor had gone out in response to which the voters of Acton on September 21st agreed to send as great a supply of foodstuffs as could possibly be spared. Lt. Samuel Davis, Samuel Jones and John Dexter were chosen as a committee to assemble the materials.

This action apparently brought up the matter of just what constituted the necessities of life since we find that Samuel Piper was reprimanded on the floor of the town meeting relative to his reprehensible conduct in carrying a load of rum out of the state. It appears that rum was highly regarded as a necessity of life. Furthermore the said necessities could not be taken out of the state since thereby the well-being of the commonwealth was placed in jeopardy. After due and solemn debate it was decided to postpone action until a special town meeting to be held the first Monday in October. Apparently the choler of the hard-drinking contingent abated somewhat in the interim since when the day arrived and the meeting was held the article was dismissed without other action.

A short time later, on November 8th, the town voted to agree to the resolves passed by the convention held in Concord on October 6th relative to the prices of the necessities of life, labor etc.

The winter of 1779-80 was particularly severe. One evidence is that the record states that the meeting scheduled for January 31, 1780 adjourned to the residence of Caroline Brooks because of the cold weather. This means that the voters went across the road to the Brooks Tavern because Caroline Brooks was the widow of Daniel, former keeper of the tavern, who had deceased in 1773.

The rate at which inflation was now rampant is made clear by a vote taken at this meeting in which fifteen dollars per day was allotted to artificers working on Mr. Adams' parsonage and ten dollars per day for common laborers. Even more eloquent are two other items, namely, three thousand pounds to make good on the one hunderd pounds promised Rev. Adams at the time of his settlement; and, a vote to pay Rev. Adams a salary of three thousand five hundred and sixty pounds for the current year. It might be added here that at this same time highway laborers received four pounds ten shillings per

day and the same amount was the going rate for a pair of oxen and a cart. Incidentally the mention of "dollars" above is the first instance of the term in the town records. From here on the words "dollar" and "pound" both appear indiscrimminately until finally the latter drops out of usage.

By May of 1780 the plan for the state government had been formulated and presented to the electorate for consideration. Evidently Acton citizens took their responsibility very seriously since there were three long meetings and much debate before minds could meet without dissension. Finally on May 29th every article of the document submitted by the people's convention was accepted.

As a result of the passage of the plan for state organization the first election under the new state constitution took place September 4th. A complete tabulation of the Acton vote is given herewith:

For Governor, 54 votes for John Hancock,
For Lt. Gov. 34 votes for Samuel Nolten,
For Senators, Josiah Stone 35, Abraham Fuller 36,
Eleazer Brooks 32, Nathaniel Gorham 35,
Loami Baldwin 30, John Cumery 7,
Oliver Barron 3, Winslow Brigham 1.

On the same day that the above vote was taken there was much other business to transact. For one thing inflation had reached a stage where the cost of supplies for the men in the army was colossal. A Mr. William Baker was engaged to supply clothing at the following prices:

Woolen blankets, each to contain five pounds of wool, $350.00 per blanket; cotton and linen shirts at $31.19 per shirt; stockings $18.00 per pair; shoes $27.00 per pair.

The town set aside $2600.00 for this purpose and chose Simon Tuttle, Samuel Fitch, Benjamin Hayward, Stephen Law, and Lt. John Heald as a committee to inspect the material supplied.

This business of army supplies was a never ending burden. The same Mr. Baker was contracted with just a month later, on October 3rd, to deliver 6060 pounds of beef at 168 pounds per hundred weight for which purpose the town voted the sum of ten thousand six hundred pounds to finance the purchase. Hardly was this done when two more demands were made necessitating on November 20th a vote to spend thirty thousand pounds to pay commitments to soldiers in the army and another on December 27th to raise sixteen thousand pounds for the purchase of additional beef to feed the army.

Early in 1781 conditions had become so irritated that at a meeting convened on February 1st an article was up for consideration having as its objective the classifying of all the males in the town.



REV. JAMES T. WOODBURY



OLD CHAPEL



WHITNEY MEMORIAL CHAPEL

It was defeated but appeared again at another meeting on February 19th at which time it was decided to defer action until the regular March meeting. When brought up then it was voted to elect a committee to assist the assessors in classifying the inhabitants of the town for the purpose of hiring the town's quota in the army of the United States and Capt. Simon Hunt, Ephraim Hosmer, Simon Tuttle, Samuel Piper and Lt. John Heald were chosen for the purpose.

An interesting sidelight on the foregoing action is that a rider was attached to the vote to the effect that, "should any class be so unfortunate as not to procure their man, after exerting their utmost to hire some, that they shall not be subject to pay any more than their proportion of the fine and the charges the several classes were put to in hiring their men in the town."

The incorporation of Carlisle as a district in 1780 gave rise to certain questions regarding school affairs that are worthy of passing interest. For one thing school houses built before the setting off of the new district and lying near to or on the boundary line were shortly subjects of debate. The question turned upon who was responsible for their maintenance. One such building was located near the home of Lt. John Heald and in consequence we find that he, together with Nathaniel Edwards and Seth Brooks, were chosen as a committee at the town meeting of March 5, 1781, to either purchase the part of the school house belonging to Carlisle or to sell the portion belonging to Acton.

From the foregoing record it would appear that when Carlisle district was set off this particular building was to be owned jointly by Acton and Carlisle, each having half. Subsequently, although the record does not state specifically, friction must have arisen over the matter of up-keep and hence the action taken.

This meeting was adjourned to the following Thursday (March 9). Among other items a vote was taken ordering the sale of the real estate of Joseph Reed to apply toward the support of his family. This man, ancestor of the author, served in Davis' company at Concord Fight, was at Bunker Hill and as a soldier of the Continental Army fought through most of the war. Despite this the town could not see its way clear to help support the family until his return. The full text of the vote is given herewith from the minutes of the said town meeting. There is no recorded similar drastic action in the case of any other soldier.

Excerpt from minutes of the town meeting of March 9, 1781 relative to Joseph Reed.

Acton, March ye 9th, 1781.

The town being met according to adjournment on the 8th article voted that the Real Estate of Joseph Reed be sold

for the support of his family.

In April the town convened for the annual state election with the following votes recorded:

For Governor, John Hancock 38,
For Lt. Governor, Azon Orne 31,
For Senators, Josiah Stone 27, Maj. Joseph Hosmer 27,
Francis Faulkner 15, Oliver Baron 12,
Nathaniel Gorham 12, James Prescott 11,
Abraham Fuller 6, Dea. William Brown 10,
Thomas Plinton 4, John Cuming 1,
Eleazer Brooks 1.

An interesting item appears at this stage in the record whereby is reflected again the stringency of money. Because of the extreme difficulty experienced by the constables, George Robbins and Daniel Barker, in the collection of the taxes, they were awarded a bonus of eight silver dollars each for "their extraordinary trouble".

More light is thrown upon the same situation by the fact that in May Francis Faulkner and Simon Hunt were delegated to make representation to the General Court for the reduction of the town's valuation.

There were other items as well that were eloquent of the money stringency. For instance Capt. Simon Hunt and Dea. Samuel Hayward were chosen as a committee to consider and compute the salary of Rev. Moses Adams in view of the value of the necessities of life. In another instance the town voted to accept a sum of money due the town from Samuel Jones in "Bills of the New Emission" at the rate of forty to one. In December it was voted not to raise the salary of Rev. Adams.

It was some time during the year 1781 that Acton received its first resident physician from without the town. Dr. Abraham Skinner came from Woodstock, Connecticut, and continued in practice until his death on April 16, 1810, at the age of fifty three. At the time of his arrival he was a young bachelor of twenty four, a state which he proceeded to alter on March 18, 1788 when he married Sarah, the daughter of Francis Faulkner, then a damsel of eighteen. Dr. Skinner was the third physician to practice in the town having been preceded by Dr. Joseph Fletcher and Dr. John Swift, son of Rev. John Swift. Dr. Skinner was the first occupant of the house on Nagog Hill Road now owned by the Thomas Snows, concerning which more will be said in another interesting connection later.

Early in the year 1782 (Jan. 29) the town considered the question of providing glazing and clapboards for the new house of Rev. Adams. It was finally decided to pay him the money still due on his settlement agreement and let him use it for that purpose.

At the March meeting the annual elections to the committee of correspondence resulted in the selection of Lt. Thomas Noyes, Lt. David Furbush, Ephraim Hosmer, Capt. Joseph Robbins and Samuel Piper.

Apparently by this time the inflationary condition had decidedly abated since we find four shillings per day set as wages for work on the highway and three shillings additional for a pair of oxen and a cart. Additional evidence appears from the fact that the town voted only thirty five pounds for the support of schools for the year.

Two quaint items appearing at this time give a queer twist to the meaning of the word "distress". In 1782 the town appointed a committee to assist James Billings in prosecuting the persons suspected of taking from him the distress which he had taken for John Parlin's estate. In this connection the word "distress" meant the seizure of goods in lieu of taxes. It would appear that James Billings seized something from John Parlin and later had it stolen by relatives of said Parlin or sympathizers with him.

Apropos of the same use of the word appears an entry dated December 2, 1782 wherein the town voted that "Mr. James Billings make no distress for Mr. Joseph Perry's rates untill the selectmen inform him they think it proper".

At the March meeting of 1783 the town took up the matter of the minister's salary and decided in view of the depreciation of the currency to augment it by an additional eighty pounds. Apparently this matter had been considered by both parties at length previous to the meeting for during the session Rev. Mr. Adams presented the following letter to the town, which, in view of its unusual contents is given herewith in full as transcribed in the records.

> *"Gentlemen, the Select-men haveing inserted an Article in the warrant for this meeting to Se what the Town will Do Concerning the Rerages of my Sallary — I will make the following Proposals in order to the Peaceable Settlement of the matter (viz) as it Appears by the Scale of Depreciation that the Town owes me* 17:3:3 *Sallery for the first year of my Ministry here and* 50:2:6 *for the Second year and Six Pound one Shilling & three Pence for the third year in whole* 123:7:2 *of which I will abate* 43:7:2 *which is some more than one third of the whole and reduces me to Something then the nominal Sum one year with another for the Remainder which is Eighty Pounds the y. I exceeding need the Money I will Consent to take an Obligation upon Interest Bareing Date the first Day of this month and Payable in one year Provided it Does Not Sute the Town to pay me now — and as Silver money has been*

full one third Depreciate take one year with another ever Since I have been in the Town my Sufferings will be at Lest 40:0:0 *pr year ByderLying*[1] *out of what is now Due till this time which must be Supposed a Large Proportion of the Burden of the war upon the Towns Complying with these Proposals I will give a Receap in full for those three first years of my Ministry.*"

M. Adams.

The above document makes rather hard going for the modern reader. It would appear, however, that the eighty pounds voted above was not to be considered as a raise in salary to be effective year after year but was rather an adjustment made to cover arrears cited in the parson's letter of complaint.

Later on in the year 1783, at the meeting on May 2 in fact, another move was made to the benefit of the minister. It appears that there had been up to this time no pew for the particular and special use of the family of Mr. Adams. In consequence with respect to an article "to see if the town will build or purchase a pew for Rev. Moses Adams", it was voted "to build two pews adjoining the broad alley taking one half of the hind seats and no more".

Apparently all was not harmonious respecting this matter since it was twice reconsidered at subsequent meetings. Finally on September 18th the decision was made to make four pews by taking the whole of the two rear seats on the lower floor and to move the seat one and one half inches forward to make more room.[2] But even with all this community interest in the location of a pew to the nearest inch the business was not yet over. When the pews were built the carpenters either willfully or otherwise took more space than they ought and as a result a committee was chosen at the March meeting of 1784 "to settle with those men who took into said pews more than they purchased". But still the matter was not wholly consummated. On March 25th a meeting convened for the purpose voted to give clear title to Capt. Robbins and others "for the ground they took into their pews more than they agreed for".

It would almost appear in all this that the case of Rev. Mr. Adams had been lost in the excitement but before adjourning the meeting just mentioned above voted that "the pew on the right hand of the broad alley adjoining the pew of Mr. John Dexter be for the Rev. Moses Adams so long as he continues to be minister in this town".

Some mention has already been made respecting the building of horse sheds. In May of 1784 Simeon Hayward and certain others

[1] Perhaps this should be the two words "by delaying" but it certainly is not so written in the record. As the product of a college graduate and a clergyman the whole letter seems to be amazingly prolix.

[2] *Town records*, vol. 1, p. 352.

were voted permission "to build horse stables in some convenient place near the meeting house on town land". The location specified was on the road leading from Daniel Shepard's to the meeting house beginning at the corner of the Widow Catherine Brook's wall. Since the Widow Brooks lived in the old Brooks Tavern which was situated almost exactly on the site of the present residence of Mr. Norman Livermore these sheds must have stood a little south of Mr. Livermore's house on the east side of Nagog Hill Road as it is known today.

Another great innovation in the conduct of the church services took place when in July of 1784 the town voted to make provision for those who led in the singing. It was decided to cut the rearmost railed seats and the two benches back of them in the front gallery to make pews for the choir. In the meantime the singers were to have the second, third, and fourth seats in the front gallery until the next town meeting "provided they can agree to change with others that are seated there".

An interesting sidelight on the progress of the new nation in matters financial is contained in a memorandum relative to an article in the town warrant for March 7, 1785. It appears that Mr. George Robbins lost a portion of the tax money he had collected and had petitioned the town relief from payment of the same. His distress was further augmented by the fact that some of the bills he had collected proved to be counterfeit. The town displayed customary New England hardheadedness by voting a thumping "NAY" on both counts.

About the time of the Revolution the remoter residents on the outskirts of Harvard, Littleton and Stow found themselves isolated from any place of worship so they purchased in 1775 the old Harvard meeting house and petitioned the General Court to be set off as a separate town. The act of incorporation was granted on February 24, 1783. The first mention of it in the Acton records appears as a memorandum dated April 25, 1785 wherein Samuel Hayward and Ephraim Forbush attest to the fact that they met Nehemiah Batchelor and Paul Hayward of Boxborough and perambulated the bounds beginning at the corner on Flag Hill.

On June 6th the matter of the church singers again came up for consideration and this time, without any apparent difficulty, it was voted to provide seats for the choir agreeable to the desire of the church.

Ever since the formation of the new nation the several states had stumbled along for better or for worse with such governamental machinery as had been put together by the active politicians. In some states it was well done and in others much was left to be desired. The

Massachusetts practices were as good as the majority but by 1786 a bill of grievances had been drawn up by the citizenry and debated in a convention held at Concord. On October 2nd a town meeting was held in Acton to discuss the findings of the Concord convention and to discover the will of the town with reference to them. It was voted that

> *"the ten articles of grievance stated by the convention at Concord are agreeable to the sentiments of this town except the eighth article. Voted to choose a committee to make a draught of instructions to their members who are to sit in convention at Concord the 3rd day of October. Voted that Francis Faulkner, Joseph Robbins, Jonas Brooks, and Samuel ? ? ? (name not legible) to be a committee for that purpose".*

The report was written and accepted and delivered to Lt. Noyes, one of the members. Then the meeting adjourned to the following Monday at which time the town would hear the report of the Acton member from the convention and act thereon.

Pursuant of the above the town met on October 9th. The petition from the convention to the General Court in behalf of twenty towns in the county was read and the question was put as to whether the town would join in the said petition with the other nineteen towns. The vote was negative. Then the question was put as to whether the town would petition the General Court on its own for a redress of grievances. Again the vote was negative. Finally the motion was made, forty eight voters being present, whether they would take under consideration the seven articles stated by the convention but never laid before the several towns for approbation and consider them as grievances and distresses. On this issue the decision was in the affirmative.

At the annual state election held on the 2nd of April 1787 the town cast sixty two votes for John Hancock for governor and seventeen for James Bowdoin. The vote for Lt. Governor was as follows; Nathaniel Gorham 52, Benjamin Lincoln 11, Thomas Cushing 11.

In September of 1787 the town voted not to make any addition to the sum allowed by the government for the support of John Kennedy and his wife. In this connection it was further voted that the selectmen arrange to "support the town poor in the most reasonable manner they can". This whole vexing problem has and ever will be a constant nag to the officers of every town so long as the indigent and the unfortunate exist. The matter of a poor house was first proposed at the beginning of the year 1774 at which time the question was put over from one meeting to another without action. According to the record it should have come to a final vote in the March meet-

ing of 1775 but no mention of it appears either in the warrant or the minutes. Apparently there had been a tacit but unpublished agreement to settle it by default. But there are always those who insist on meeting troubles forthwith and so we find that in May of 1788 a vote was passed to build a poor house thirty feet square "with a chimney with four smoker, eight feet posts." A committee consisting of Francis Faulkner, Simon Tuttle, David Barnard, Daniel Davis, and Nathaniel Faulkner was chosen to determine the location of the said house.

In the state election of 1788 the town cast fifty five votes for John Hancock. The vote for Lt. Governor was as follows: Samuel Adams 36, James Warren 15, Benjamin Lincoln 1, Elbridge Gary 1.

About a month later on December 18th the town cast its first recorded vote for a representative for the district of Middlesex to represent the people of the Commonwealth in the Congress of the United States. Nathaniel Gorham received 27 votes, Elbridge Gary 16 votes and Joseph Varnum 2 votes.[1]

For some reason another vote was taken on the subsequent January 13th, 1789 with the following results: Elbridge Gary 37, James Winthrop 11, Eleazer Brooks 5, and General Hull 3. Since the name of Nathaniel Gorham does not apear as a candidate in the second election it may be that illness caused him to retire from the contest. He did not die since his name appears again in the election of April 6, 1789

In the April meeting of 1789 article four raised the question as to whether the town would "keep a Gramar school". This is the first time the term appears. No distinction had ever been made before in the type of school. The matter was held over to the next meeting. When the next meeting assembled on May 4th forty nine pounds was voted for the school support but no mention was made of the matter of a grammar school. Consequently it is difficult to know just what connotation the word "Grammar" had at that time.

At the March meeting of 1790 the town was divided into five school districts and this practice continued until 1800, then there were four districts for the next thirty years, at which time six districts were set aside and continued until the[2] end of the century when the amalgamated school practice, with transportation provided, brought about the reduction to three districts as at present. This latter arrangement will be considered in more detail at the proper time.

On March 7, 1791 the question of the care of the poor once more came to an issue and it was voted "to build a workhouse to support the poor". A committee was appointed to determine the location

[1] Due to an error by the clerk the name of Elbridge Gerry was recorded as as Elbridge Gary.
[2] Fletcher, p. 278.

and to let out the contract. At a subsequent meeting in May it was further specified that Capt. Joseph Brown together with the selectmen purchase from Reuben Brown the place called Blood's Farm for the purpose of supporting the poor thereon.

At the same meeting (May 9, 1791) a new note appears in the conduct and management of the schools. A committee consisting of Francis Faulkner, Jonas Brooks, Benjamin Hayward, Thomas Noyes, Moses Richardson, Seth Brooks and Jonas Heald was elected to "provide schoolmasters and to visit and inspect the schools agreeable to law". This obviously implies that the state had at last taken a hand in the conduct of the schools with the objective in mind of at least nominal effort looking toward some sort of standardization.

At the annual state election on April 2, 1792 Acton was once more found solidly intrenched in the patriot column. For governor John Hancock received 32 votes, Samuel Phillips 7, and Oliver Prescott 6. For Lt. governor Samuel Adams polled 37 and Samuel Phillips 6.

On September 4th the town took action to procure a pest house for the isolation of small-pox patients. The manner in which the term is used in the record makes it appear that inoculation implied isolation as well. It was further decided that the pest house should be under the direction of the resident physician, Dr. Abraham Skinner. The location of this building is no longer known but it is slightly ironical that Acton's last such institution (circa 1900) was Dr. Skinner's house, now the residence of the Thomas Snows.

At a meeting early in November of this same year it was voted to divide the town into four school districts instead of five and a committee of thirteen was chosen for the purpose.[1] This was the onset of a long wrangle extending over many meetings. The reduction was not really effectual until 1800.

It will be recalled that at the March meeting of 1781 the town voted to sell the real estate of Joseph Reed, soldier of the Continental Army, for taxes in arrears due to his service throughout the war. The conclusion of action upon this matter came on September 23, 1793, eight years after his demise, when the town passed the following action, which is given in detail because of its unusual nature:

> *"Voted on article 2 that the town will secure and defend harmless Lt. Thomas Noyes administrator of the estate of Joseph Reed late of Acton deceased from all cost, charge or demand that shall arise by reason of his selling the whole of the said deceased Reed's estate and paying into the treasurer of the said town of Acton for the use of the said town the whole of the money said estate shall sell for after deducting from the same the charges of settling*

[1] See Acton town records, vol. 1, p. 405.

said estate and he is not to render said estate insolvent. Also voted that as Sibbel Reed, widow of the said Joseph Reed deceased, hath given to the inhabitants of the town of Acton a quitclaim deed of all her rights of dower or thirds in the estate aforesaid that she the said Sibbel Reed shall receive annually from the treasurer of the said town of Acton the interest of one third part of the money that said estate shall sell for after paying the charges for settling the same during her natural life."

Sybil Reed, great-great grandmother of the author, died on November 27, 1824. Presumably the meagre stipend above mentioned, whatever it may have been, was paid to her during the thirty one years that remained to her after the passage of the vote.

It was sometime during the year 1793 that the practice of reading out the line of the hymn to be sung was discontinued. This technique was called "lining out the hymn" and operated as follows, the minister read a line of the hymn and then the singers and the congregation, most of whom were thoroughly familiar with the tune, sang that one line, and thus the process continued alternately between the minister and the congregation.

During the year 1794 there was nothing of outstanding importance but several small items give evidence of the fact that the town was handling its affairs competently.

Fifty votes were cast for Samuel Adams for governor and one for William Cushing in the state election. Eighty pounds were voted for the support of the schools of which sum twenty five pounds was to go for the women's school. Pursuant to an act of Congress it was voted to pay seven dollars per month to those who should serve as minute men and to this was added a bonus of two dollars at the time of enlistment. In addition, pursuant to resolves of the General Court (enacted June 26, 1794) a vote was passed to procure a map of the town. Francis Faulkner, Jonas Brooks, and John Edwards were elected as a committee to attend to the matter.

At the town meeting on March 2, 1795 the question of apportioning the town into five school districts was debated at length and finally a committee of fourteen was chosen to report at the regular meeting in May.[1] This meeting, when convened on May 6 voted to raise 80 pounds for school support, 20 pounds of which was to be expended for the women's school. The committee of school administration and inspection was made up of Aaron Jones, John Robbins, Job Brooks, Jonas Heald, Samuel Parlin, Abraham Hapgood, and John Adams. On the held-over question of the school districts it was decided to have five, each person to send his children to the district

[1] See town records, vol. 1, p. 428.

of his choice and to have his school levy spent in that district.

In March preceding the town had voted to sell the town farm but recinded the action at the May meeting above mentioned.

According to the church records the following action was taken on March 23, 1797, "It is the desire of the church that singing should be performed as a part of the public worship in the church and the congregation".[1]

2nd. It is the desire of the church that the selectmen insert an article in the warrant for the next meeting in May to see if the town will raise a sum of money to support a singing school in the town and that the pastor apply to the selectmen in the name of the church for that purpose.

3rd. Voted to choose five persons to lead the singing in the future.

4th. Voted to choose a committee of three to nominate five persons for the singers.

Deacon Joseph Brabrook, Deacon Simon Hunt and Thomas Noyes were chosen as the nominating committee. They selected Winthrop Faulkner, Nathaniel Edwards, Jr., Simon Hosmer, Josiah Noyes and Paul Brooks and these persons were elected by vote to lead the singing in the future.

Voted, "It is the desire of the church that the singers use a Bass viol in the public worship, if agreeable to them".

Voted, "It is the desire of the church that all the persons who are qualified would assist the singing in the public worship."

The further statement is made that Deacon Simon Hosmer played for thirty years (presumably the bass viol mentioned above).

It is quite probable that the Acton choir at some period used the New England Psalm Singer written by the versatile and amazingly productive psalm tune composer William Billings of Stoughton. Several other publications as well as two hundred and sixty three tunes are credited to him.[2]

At the March meeting of 1797 an event took place which marked the close of an era. Francis Faulkner, after serving as town clerk since 1762 relinquished the office and Aaron Jones was elected in his place.

This eminent citizen of sterling worth was born in Andover, Massachusetts, on September 29, 1728 and died on August 5, 1805. He was the son of Ammiruhammah Faulkner, who moved to Acton from Andover in 1735 and erected the mills still in operation at South Acton. He early became active in town affairs and was a mem-

[1] Fletcher, p. 245.

[2] Hamilton McDougal; *Early New England* Psalmody, p. 48.

In 1802 the book in use was *Columbian and European Harmony* by Barthlomew Brown and others, printed by Thomas and Andrews in Boston. It contained 157 Psalm tunes in four parts. A copy in the town clerk's office was donated by Rev. F. P. Wood in 1893.

ber of the provincial congress in 1774 and also served as representative in General Court in 1783, '84, and '85. He was a member of the committee of safety and of several important conventions held during the Revolution. He held a military commission under George III but renounced it in order to work for the opposers to the crown. In February or March of 1775 he was elected major of a regiment to contest any invasion. On the morning of April 19th Dr. Prescott was sent to warn him that British troops were enroute for Concord. He fired three guns to give the alarm and marched to the North Bridge with the Acton men under Simon Hunt. He was a Lt. Colonel in a regiment of Middlesex militia that was called to reinforce the Continental Army at Dorchester Heights in March of 1776, was in service at the surrender of Burgoyne and was in command of the regiment that took the prisoners back to Cambridge. He was a gentleman, a patriot, a cultivated citizen, an able and practical legislator and a public servant of unusual common sense. He married Elizabeth Muzzy of Lexington in 1755. She lived but two weeks. In 1759 he contracted a second marriage with Rebecca Keyes of Brookfield of which union there were eleven children.

Francis Faulkner was one among the small group of men whose service to the town has been of long duration, superior quality, and performed without stint and without expectation or desire for more than token renumeration.

In 1799 the town sought to solve one angle of the care of the poor by putting out to the lowest bidder the care of David Chaffin and his wife. The contract was struck off to Noyes Richardson for ninety-six dollars per annum. At the same time Robert Barbour was awarded the rental of the town farm for the sum of twelve dollars.

There are in Acton, still functioning as comfortable and imposing dwellings, four houses built during this general period that were for many years designated as "the lottery houses". Their story is unique and well worthy of the telling.

Previous to the Revolution and on into the first decade of the nineteenth century lotteries flourished in the Commonwealth under legislative sanction. The first of these was granted to Harvard College in 1765 for the building of a new dormitory but for some reason the lottery never went into operation. One of the more famous of these devices for the raising of funds was the lottery of 1794-96. In 1793 the Governing Board of Harvard petitioned the General Court for the right to hold a lottery to provide for a new building. There was some opposition to the project on the ground that the virtuous National Convention of France had abolished lotteries "forever"; but Harvard obtained the desired privilege, appointing a highly respectable board of managers which included

George Richards Minot the historian (A. B. 1778) who received five per cent of the ticket sale. The act granting the lottery in 1794 also appointed Benjamin Austin, Jr., Samuel Cooper, Henry Warren, and John Kneeland as managers.[1]

Three classes of 25,000 tickets at five dollars each, 8350 of them "in the money" and a grand prize of ten thousand dollars went off very well. The drawing of the first class began November 13, 1794, the second class April 9, 1795, and the third class September 17, 1795 at the Chamber of the House of Representatives in Boston. These three went so well that the managers were induced to try a fourth class at ten dollars per ticket for a grand prize of twenty thousand dollars plus numerous lesser ones, scaling down at last to 3700 prizes of sixteen dollars each. Despite heroic appeals to "lovers of literature and the college to aid the cause" this last issue failed and the affair ended in an unseemly squabble between the winner of the grand prize, the managers who could not pay, and the Harvard Corporation. The net result so far as the college was concerned was a little in excess of eleven thousand dollars. This sum, together with eight years interest and about five thousand dollars from the general funds, completed Stoughton Hall in 1805.

Tickets were sold at lottery offices, which flourished like the bucket shops of a century later, and were advertised extensively in the newspapers. Prominent among the agencies were Gilbert & Dean, 79 State St.; Eben Larkin, 50 Cornhill; W. & T. Kidder, 9 Market Square; Wright, Goodwin & Stockwell, 27 Union St.; and William Hilliard, Cambridge Book Store, to mention merely a few of a long list.

The act of 1794 forbade the selling of fractional parts at advanced prices but the practice of selling halves, quarters, and eighths originated in the lottery offices and was very prevalent. This scheme drew in as adventurers many who could not afford whole tickets.

The foregoing explanation provides the background for the tie-up with Acton. In one of the Harvard lotteries, presumably the one of 1794, Mr. Abel Conant bought a ticket for five dollars and then sold three quarters of it to neighbors at a dollar and a quarter apiece. One of these was almost certainly Dr. Abraham Skinner and another must have been John Robbins who married Sally Jones of Acton in 1791. The identity of the third is unknown to the writer. The ticket won the grand prize and with their respective shares the winners built new houses in three cases and embellished one already standing, apparently, in the fourth.

[1] *Three Centuries of Harvard* by Samuel Eliot Morrison; *Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Transactions,* Dec. 1928, vol. XXVII, P. 129-222. Material re-arranged and edited by C. P. Burrill, May 13, 1952.

The original ticket has been preserved in the Conant family since the day of the drawing and is now in the possession of Mr. Augustine B. Conant who kindly loaned it for the accompanying photograph showing the ticket and the four houses involved in the transaction. For more than a century the residences have been identified as the Conant place, the Elbridge Robbins place, the Charles Tuttle place, and the Horace Hosmer place. Mr. Conant still resides on the family homestead. The other three are now occupied by the William Hinckleys, the Thomas Snows, and the Robert Davisons respectively.

The Conant house has the date 1793 cut in one of the cellar stones. It would appear from this that Abel Conant had his house started when he received the lottery windfall because he was not a man of wealth and the main structure has had no additions since the original building was erected. Mr. Horace Tuttle on his map of Acton drawn in 1890 ascribes the date 1799 to the Tuttle house and the date 1800 to the Robbins house. The Hosmer house is presumably considerably older. During its occupancy by lawyer Millan about a generation ago the date 1775 was painted on the chimney. If this was authentic it would imply that the owner used his money to amplify the old mansion.

In connection with the affair two bits of amusing legend have come down to us. Through the Conant family we hear that Abel Conant, after due deliberation concluded that five dollars was quite a considerable sum to risk in a single plunge and hence induced the other men to put in with him. Via the late Mrs. Taylor Fletcher comes the pungent version that the four friends, being citizens of high standing in the community, and in the church in particular, were a wee bit suspicious of the attitude of their townsmen on the subject of gambling, and concluded that the moral stigma, if any, would be less damning if shared.

To those of us who in our automobiles move about so nonchalantly and settle down here and there at our sheerest whim the old fashioned practice of "warning out" may come as an intriguing surprise. It was customary to insist that persons newly coming to the town obtain permission from the selectmen, otherwise they were warned out. The sample given below, from which the identifying family name has been deleted, is but one of many appearing in the ancient records.

> *To either of the constables of the Town of Acton, greeting:*
>
> *You are in the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts directed to warn and give notice unto Jonathan T. . . . . of Dorchester in the County of Suffolk labourer who has lately come into this town for the purpose of abiding therein not having obtained the town's consent therefore that he with his wife and their children depart the limits thereof*

within fifteen days and of this precept with your doings within twenty days next coming such that further proceedings may be had in the premises as the law directs.

Given under our hands and seal of Acton aforesaid this twentieth day of August A. D. 1790.

Francis Faulkner

Aaron Jones Selectmen

In obediance to the warrant I have warned and given notice to the within named persons as within directed.

Benjamin Hayward, Constable.

Apparently the error of brother Jonathan above mentioned was that he neglected to secure the permission of the selectmen. For those who enjoy something a bit on the piquant side mention may be made of the case of a certain Mr. W .... and the Widow C..., both of Stow, who, "now being resident in the same house and lately come to town" were precipitately informed that, "they and their children depart the limits of the town in fifteen days".

HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF ACTON

PART IV

1800-1850

The census of 1800 showed that nine hundred and one persons resided within the township limits.

In the gubernatorial election of that year the contest was between the Federalists and the Jeffersonian Party, then known as Republicans. Elbridge Gerry, who received seventy seven Acton votes, was a Republican and subsequently Vice-President under Jefferson. Caleb Strong, who received but twelve votes, was later governor of Massachusetts as a Federalist and defied Madison when the President tried to call out the Massachusetts militia in 1812. In the same election the Acton vote for Lieutenant-Governor was eighty eight for Moses Gill and one for Elbridge Gerry.

An angle not previously noted in connection with the support of the poor appears in the minutes of the town meeting of March 2, 1801, wherein a memorandum is made that Ephraim Brooks is to be let out for one year to Abraham Hapgood, said Hapgood to pay the town the sum of twenty seven dollars and in addition the clothes of the said Brooks are "to be kept good".

Somewhat similar agreements were frequently made in connection with apprentices seeking to learn a trade. Fletcher gives a characteristic one with respect to Gill Piper . A particularly good one now in the possession of Dr. Wendell F. Davis is given herewith in detail.

> *This indenture witnesseth that Josiah Headen of Littleton in the County of Middlesex and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, cooper, hath put and by these presence doth put place and bind out his son Joshua Headen and the said Joshua Headen doth hereby put and bind out himself as an apprentice to Ebenezer Davis of Acton in said County, Wheelright, to learn the art and trade of a wheelright, the said Joshua Headen after the manner of an apprentice to dwell with and serve the said Ebenezer Davis from the day of the date hereof until the ninth day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixteen at which time the said apprentice, if he be living, will be twenty one years of age during all which time or term the said apprentice his said master well and faithfully shall serve, his secrets keep, and his lawful commands everywhere at all times readily obey, he shall do no damage to his said master nor wilfully suffer any to be done by others and if any*

to his knowledge be intended he shall give his master seasonable notice thereof, he shall not waste the goods of his said master nor lend them unlawfully to any. At cards, dice, or any other unlawful game he shall not play. Fornication he shall not commit, nor matrimony contract during the term, taverns, ale houses or places of gaming he shall not haunt or frequent, from the service of his master he shall not absent himself but in all things and at all times he shall carry and behave himself as a good and faithful apprentice ought during the time or term aforesaid

And the said Ebenezer Davis on his part doth hereby promise, covenant, and agree to teach and instruct said apprentice or cause him to be instructed and taught in the art and trade of a wheelright by the best way and means he can if the said apprentice be capable to learn, and during said term to provide the said apprentice with meat, drink lodging washing nursing and doctoring and to allow him sixteen weeks schooling and to give him one Hundred Dollars to provide his own Cloathing which is to be a full compensation for his labor, said money to be paid an proportion of it each year if he may want it. I furthermore agree that the said apprentice shall work at his trade all the time after March the Ninth 1814 *except in haying time.*

In testimony whereof the said parties have to and one other indenture of the same tenor and date interchangeably set their hands and seals the twenty first day of August in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirteen.

Signed sealed and delivered
in presence of us

JOSIAH HAYDEN

NOAH STEARNS

EBENEZER DAVIS
JOSHUA N. HAYDEN

It will doubtless come as a surprise to some to learn that the Wilde Memorial Library was not the first venture in the town toward literary improvement. In 1910 there came to light in the garret of an old homestead in East Acton[1] a document which revealed the existence of a library in 1801.

The manuscript was an order from the trustees of the Acton

[1] Town report of March, 1910, p. 71.



EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH 1846

DAVIS MONUMENT,

OCTOBER 29th, 1851.

The General Committee of Arrangements of the towns of Acton, Concord, Sudbury, Stow, Littleton, Boxboro', Carlisle, and Westford, desire to notify the public, that said Monument will be dedicated on the 29th instant. The inhabitants of all those towns, whose citizens bore arms in that GREAT FIRST BATTLE DAY OF OUR COUNTRY, the 19th of April 1775, the Council, Senate and House of Representatives of 1851, are particularly urged to attend—and the patriotic men of this Commonwealth generally. And this is the more fitting, because the Commonwealth co-operate with the town of Acton to build said monument. True, all alike would be glad to perpetuate the fame of these glorious deeds of patriotism, and to hand down to posterity the loved names of those who died for us in that opening conflict of the American Revolution, and especially the names of DAVIS and HOSMER, who fell heading the column of attack at Old North Bridge, in Concord, believed to have been the very first organized attack upon the troops of King George in that memorable war.

A Procession will be formed on the common at Acton Centre, two miles from the Depots, on the Fitchburg Rail Road, at 9 o'clock A. M., to be escorted by the Ancient and Honorable Artillery of Boston, and several companies of the Mass. Militia, all under the general direction of Col. W. E. FAULKNER, Chief Marshal of the day. The procession after moving towards the Old Grave Yard, and receiving the dis-interred remains of Capt. ISAAC DAVIS, and Privates, ABNER HOSMER and JAMES HAYWARD, all of Acton who fell at Concord Fight, will proceed to the recently erected Monument, and there under the same, re-inter those remains; thence march to the Pavilion to hear an Oration from Gov. BOUTWELL, and a Poem from REV. J. PIERPONT, of Medford, and some original Hymns from REV. M. DURANT, of Bifield, a native of Acton, sung to the cherished tunes of our fathers.

Addresses are expected from Gov. Everett, R. Rantoul Jr., R. Choate, J. P. Hale, Jr. and other distinguished guests. The shoe buckles, Davis had on when shot, and the powder horn through which Hayward was killed with other relics of the old war will be exhibited. Mr. Jonathan Harrington, the only survivor of those scenes, now alive at Lexington, will probably be present.—He was Capt. Parker's fifer.

Ladies will be accommodated, and the whole audience, at least all who have tickets for dinner, will be comfortably seated under the Pavilion.

All pasengers will be conveyed to and from the two depots in Acton on the Fitchburg Rail Road, to Acton Centre, at reasonable prices. The Military, Fire Companies, Odd-Fellows, and other regular Societies, in bodies, with uniforms or badges, will be carried over the Fitchburg Railroad at half price if passage is applied for by officers of companies.

All civil and literary societies, and all military companies, whether particularly written to or not, are hereby respectfully invited to attend, and places will be assigned them in the procession, on presenting themselves to the Chief Marshal at the Town Hall. All persons having tickets to dinner will be sure of a convenient seat to hear the Oration, &c. and as many besides as the Pavilion will accommodate. All are advised to procure tickets for dinner. The dinner is to be furnished by JOHN WRIGHT, of Boston, and the tickets to be, for Gentlemen, $1,00 each, and for Ladies and the Military at 75 cents each.

By Order of Committee of Arrangements:

J. T. WOODBURY, *Chairman,*
J. M MILES, *Secretary.*

Chisholm's Fast Press, 5000 per hour, No. 5 Water Street, Boston

Social Library to Seth Brooks, as Collector, to obtain from diverse persons certain moneys for fines and damages.

The social library originated in England and had its inception in America in Connecticut in the 1730's. By 1775 each of the New England states had at least one and by 1780 Massachusetts had sixteen.[2]

Rigorously defined a social library was a voluntary association of individuals who had contributed money toward a common fund for the purchase of books. Although every member had the right to use the books of the organization, title to all was retained by the group. The organization could be informal, as the Acton group appears to have been, or legalized into a corporation.

The free public library, an institution supported by the town as a public trust, was a child of the 1830's.

Because of its unique character the manuscript mentioned above is given below in full.

Acton, June 1st, 1801, to Seth Brooks, Collector for Social Library in Acton, you are directed to collect the following fines of the several persons hereafter named and to pay in the same to Capt. John Robbins, Treasurer for said Social Library, within six months for the use of the said Library:

Seth Brooks, Eveling. Vol. 1, kept one day too long	$ .03
Capt. Joseph Brown, Pilgrims Progress, soiled page 194, 195	.04
David Davis, Stack house, Vol. kept 5 days too long	.15
John Dexter, Spectator, Vol. 2, grease spot on edge p. 49 to 59	.05
Capt. Stevens Hayward, Hunter, Vol. 3, 2 days to long,	.06
John Hunt, Hunter Vol. 2, one day too long	
John Hunt, Hunter, Vol. 3, last day after 1 Monday of May	.28
Nathan Hayward, Stack house, Vol. 1, 4 days after last Monday of May	1.00
Amos Noyes, Blair Vol. 3rd, 1 day after last Monday of May	.24
John Prescott, Hunter, Vol. 3rd, too long 4 days	.12
Dr. A. Skinner, Morse, Vol. 1, spot p. 200	.03
Lt. Samuel White, Stack house, Vol. 6, 2 days too long	.06
Samuel Wright, Jr. N. E. Farmer, 14 days too long	.42
Paul Hayward, Moors Journal, Vol. 1, leaves loosed at beginning	.06
James Coolidge, Gordon, Vol. 3, 1 day too long	.03
Deacon Simon Hunt, Stack house, Vol. 4, spot page 421	
Moses Wood, Doddridge, Vol. 1, spot page 265.	

[2] Jesse H. Shera, *Foundations of the Public Library*, p. 54.

Abraham Skinner
Samuel Parlin
David Barnard

Aaron Jones
John Edwards

Trustees

In December of 1801 Massachusetts published a new map of the Commonwealth and the town voted that a copy be framed and deposited with the Rev. Moses Adams for the use of the inhabitants

In March of 1802 it was decided that the time had arrived when two constables were no longer needed. Consequently the number was reduced to one and the office was sold to the highest bidder. Calvin Heyward was awarded the contract at a figure of twenty five dollars and sixty cents. He must have been a typical forehanded Yankee trader because he also secured the position of tax collector with a bid of four and a half pence per pound. This item is interesting not only for its intrinsic value but furthermore because it illustrates how tenacious was the custom of using the old terminology with respect to money.

It was in 1802 also that another step was made along the lines of social consciousness and civic betterment. For the first time the town voted "NAY" on the question of permitting hogs to run at large. This question had appeared in the town warrants perennially since the days of incorporation and a positive decision had become a foregone conclusion. Now however, at long last, in spite of vigorous opposition by those who were reluctant to build fence, a growing sense of propriety appeared to have taken hold of the public mind.

Acton has been a town where civic pride was ever an important consideration. Visitors frequently comment upon the appearance of the common with its vista of well-kept greensward and lofty rows of ash, elm and maple and upon the freshly painted neatness of the town buildings. In consequence it is not surprising to discover that in July of 1801 the question was laid before the voters as to what action should be taken with respect to the bushes and vines that had grown up in the cemetery. Anyone acquainted with the trimness of the better type of New England village will be aware that here was a veritable call to Armageddon. Unanimously it was voted that the selectmen should choose a day when the inhabitants should meet in a body and "subdue the brush in the burying ground".

At the same meeting we find broached for the first time the question of a new meeting house. The old one had served the town for over sixty years and was not only showing signs of age but was becoming too small for the increasing population. The article was dismissed as was another at a subsequent meeting but the question was in the minds of the people and was to bear fruit within a decade.

At this time also the town first specified the sum to be expended for

the maintenance of the highways. Heretofore the citizenry had been called upon to labor personally or supply a substitute but now the sum of four hundred dollars was set aside to be expended at the rate of eight cents per hour for a man and a like amount for the use of a pair of oxen and a cart.

Nor did the trend stop there. The movement blossomed forth in a wholly new direction. Taxpayers are prone to think that money is squandered in this day and age but contemporaneous chagrin is mild compared to that of certain of the citizenry when the idea of "painting the schoolhouses" was broached. In modern parlance they had now "seen everything". They put up a lively fight but the craze of the new era was not to be denied. The progressives went on to new heights and specified that the color was to be red and Spanish brown with the windows done in white lead. Then, with the bit in their teeth they perpetrated an added bit of sheer insanity. With delightful primness the town clerk records that it was decided not only to erect but paint "necessary houses" for each school. As a gem of propriety descriptive of the old fashioned privy the idiom can scarcely be surpassed, particularly in the minds of the generation old enough to recall but not to regret certain January mornings in the distant past.

Having decided to go on such a spending spree the electorate had to retrench somewhere. Consequently it was voted in the April meeting of 1802 to rent the land portion of the town farm to the omnipresent Calvin Heywood for nine dollars. He was to have the hay but it was specifically stipulated that he return to the farm as much manure as the hay would make. Just how this problem in agricultural logistics was to be solved is not made clear. It would appear that Simon Hosmer, who rented the buildings and one half acre of land for eight dollars and a quarter, made the simpler bargain.

By May of 1803 the question of a new meeting house had so far developed that it was decided to hire Colonel Holman of Bolton to survey the town and ascertain the center of the land area. John Edwards, Capt. Joseph Brown, Lt. Simon Tuttle, and George Robbins were chosen as a committee to assist in the matter and to help decide as to the location of the projected house of worship.

Colonel Holman and the committee completed the work and erected a pile of stones at the spot of their decision but the town, convened in meeting on September 5th, voted not to accept the location but did agree to build as near to the then standing first meeting house as the lay of the land would permit.[1] As a committee to design a meeting

[1] It is not known where Col. Holman and his committee designated the center of the town. On a present geological survey map, if one draws a line from the extreme northeast corner of the town (the Westford, Carlisle, Acton corner) perpendicular to the Maynard, Acton line, the middle of such a line falls almost exactly at the laboratory of the Technology Instrument Corporation in Acton Centre.

house and receive bids for its erection John Edwards, Capt. Daniel Davis, William Stearns, Robert Chaffin and Lt. Simon Tuttle were chosen.

At first it seemed as if the site of the new edifice was to be readily-decided but very shortly the various interested parties began to vie for supremacy until a battle reminiscent of the first meeting house was at a high pitch. Acton has always had a penchant for going all out on major issues. The location of the railroad, the bounty question, the site of the high school, and in the present the problem of zoning, although far in the future, were foreshadowed by this classic of political mayhem. A round by round account of the fray, lasting for three years, goes something as follows.

In April of 1804 a committee of twelve, six from each of the two parts of the town, was chosen in the effort to reach some agreement. In August it was voted to reconsider all former votes and to hold a special meeting on the first Monday of September to try to fix upon a location. The question of building a meeting house somewhere was not at issue. Everybody wanted one built and this same session voted to raise two thousand dollars for the purpose and Simon Tuttle, Robert Chaffin, Daniel Davis, Phineas Wheeler and William Stearns constituted the committee to make the plans and let out the work.

About three weeks later, on September 25th, another committee, consisting of fifteen, failed to agree and decided to convene again on November 5th with the proviso that in the meantime the building committee should take no action. Apparently this group came to no decision because on November 19th a special town meeting was called which adjourned for half an hour while a committee of nine deliberated as to a site. In due course this committee submitted a report together with two alternate suggestions, all of which were voted down. After much argument the town meeting as a whole voted to build "on the flat rock near where the old way from Lt. Moses Richardson's to the residence of Josiah Noyes crosses the town way that leads from the west part of the town to the present meeting house". This location was somewhere between the residence of the late Murray Brown and the little frog pond on the land of Howard Reed. It is of passing interest only since it was reconsidered on the first Monday in April of 1805 when by a vote of 69 to 61 it was decided to build "on the most convenient height of land between the present meeting house and the residence of Deacon Joseph Brabrook". This would have placed the building somewhere between the present school house and the present post office but, as seen from the closeness of the vote, the two camps were so evenly matched that this decision was of short duration.

On September 2nd a real show-down town meeting went into session with both sides determined to hold fast in spite of anything.

First off a motion to reconsider all past actions failed by 65 to 62. Then a motion to build on the land of Josiah Noyes failed by 66 to 61. Then the suggestion was made that the question be submitted to outside referees but that failed by 63 to 60. Matters being thus at a stalemate it was proposed that a new committee be chosen to again look over the ground and report. This motion by some strange quirk of circumstance passed and after considerable haggling twenty was agreed upon as an acceptable number to constitute the committee. By this time the day was far spent and an adjournment was made to September 6th. When this meeting convened the opening gun was a motion to dismiss all previous actions on the matter. It failed by a vote of 63 to 58. Then a motion to build on the land of John White prevailed by 65 to 62 but no sooner had the result been announced than a motion to reconsider and build on the land near to Mr. Brabrook's passed. This in turn was immediately followed by a vote of 62 to 46 to choose a committee of outside judges. By this time another day had waned and the weary citizens adjourned sine die.

All this happened in September of 1805. During the winter the pot must have continued to boil since May 5th, 1806 all previous votes taken on the matter were voided and the start made anew. A motion to have a committee of three disinterested outsiders finally prevailed after considerable argument as to the number. A committee of ten was chosen to select the aforementioned group of three[1] and the session recessed for twenty minutes while the deliberations were in progress at the residence of Paul Brooks across the road in the old Brooks Tavern. In due time the committee reported the choice of General Joseph Varnum of Dracut, General John Whiting of Lancaster and Walter McFarland of Hopkinton. This group proved to be acceptable and in consequence David Barnard and Samuel Jones from the east part of the town and Winthrop Faulkner and Aaron Jones from the west part were chosen a committee to notify the said gentlemen and wait upon them.

This group met in due course and on May 22nd made report to the town wherein it was stated that the chosen location was close to the residence of Mr. John White, or in other words on the site now occupied by the town hall.

On June 30, 1806 the town finally agreed to accept the choice by a vote of 73 to 59, a figure which shows conclusively that even then all was not peace and harmony. At the same time it was decided that a committee of fifteen be chosen to stake out the ground and ascertain the cost of purchasing from the several owners the necessary land. The committee acted immediately and during a recess the voters viewed

[1] Aaron Jones, Winthrop Faulkner, Stevens Hayward, Moses Richardson, Joseph Brown, David Barnard, Samuel Jones, Daniel White, Robert Chaffin, Simon Tuttle.

the area staked out. Upon reassembling it was voted (64 to 42) to reimburse the owners to an aggregate amount of $571.80. The larger purchases were from Deacon Joseph Brabrook, 25 rods at $200 per acre; John White a little over half an acre, Mr. White to remove his house and fruit trees; of Paul Brooks one half acre and 27 rods. In addition James Fletcher gave to the town nine rods and Samuel and James Jones donated one acre 27 rods.

It would appear from Fletcher (p. 264) that the gift of land from Mr. Samuel Jones was made simultaneously with the others but there arises here a conflict in chronology since in 1806 Mr. Jones was already deceased and his wife remarried. He was a lawyer and an important citizen, maintained an office in the north end of the house now occupied by Mr. Dewey Boatman, and once represented the town in the General Court. He was known to have an aesthetic interest in the village and was an ardent advocate of a spacious common. He built and resided in the dwelling where Mr. Oliver D. Wood now lives and constructed a turnpike, later abandoned but now known as Wood Lane. He was the second husband of Mrs. Isaac Davis to whom he was married in 1782.

Subsequently Mr. Jones and his wife went to New Orleans and then to Natchez where Mr. Jones died. The widow returned by sea, was shipwrecked off Cape Cod, was washed ashore by clinging to a bit of wreckage, and returned to marry in 1802 Mr. Francis Leighton of Westford.

Aaron Jones, David Barnard, Winthrop Faulkner, Phinehas Wheeler and Capt. Daniel Davis were chosen a committee to make a draft of the new meeting house. They went about the business with dispatch and energy and in the early autumn (October 6th) the plan, which envisioned a building fifty seven feet by fifty four feet with a fifteen foot projection on the front was accepted and the committee was empowered to build the same and sell the pews therein. The same committee was also delegated to assume charge of the grading of the new town common. This they did by setting dates by school districts for the inhabitants to come in groups to do the work.

An intriguing item relative to the sale of pews appears in an article in the warrant for the meeting held on November third wherein it was propounded whether the committee, "shall at the sale of the pews give the people any spiritous liquors at the expense of the town". Much to the chagrin of many no doubt, the vote was in the negative. Thereby hangs a tale. In all probability the negative vote was not so much on moral grounds as because of the fact that to supply all comers to their satisfaction would have involved no mean expense.

According to the Acton Patriot for February 20th, 1875, the amount of liquor consumed in Acton for the year 1807 was in excess of five gallons per capita including children. Between the two Sabbath

church services it was quite common for selectmen, deacons, and other estimable citizens to repair to the taverns for assorted drinks.

The new meeting house when completed was universally admired as a model in its design. It had an elevated square tower for the belfry and above the belfry another ornamental circular tower, supported by high posts, with a circular roof.

The interior arrangements consisted of a spacious vestibule with three doors from the outside and the same from within; square pews with rising seats; an elevated pulpit approached by long and winding steps on either side; a high gallery running around two sides and the rear with a curved front; a high, arched ceiling.

The townspeople had reason to be proud of their new temple of worship. It was not only artistic but it was sturdily wrought. There was timber enough in it to construct a whole village according to modern building methods. A crew of sailors was imported from Boston to handle the massive beams at what were then considered to be lofty heights.

The deacons of the church were Simon Hunt, Benjamin Hayward, Josiah Noyes, John Wheeler, John White, Phinehas Wheeler, Daniel Fletcher Barker, Silas Hosmer, John White 2nd.

The holders of the left body pews were Mrs. Simeon Hayward, David Barnard, Stevens Hayward, Deacon John White, Luther Conant and on the right side Simon Hosmer, Silas Holden, Levi Waitt, Deacon Benjamin Hayward, Seth Brooks.

With respect to the musical part of the service the choristers were Winthrop Faulkner, Silas Jones, Luther B. Jones, Daniel Jones; the players on musical instruments, Jonathan Billing and Abraham Handley (bass viol); Eben Davis (double bass viol); Winthrop Faulkner, Henry Skinner (violin); Elnathan Jones, Samuel Hosmer (clarionet), and the singers were Polly Davis, Ellen Jones, Lucy J. Jones, Abigail Jones, Jerusha Brooks, Ann Piper, Capt. Abel Jones. Simon Davis, Seth Davis, Benjamin Wilde, Amasa Wilde, Edward Wetherbee, Oliver Wetherbee, Jedidiah Tuttle, Rebecca Davis, Susan Davis, Catharine Wetherbee, Lucinda Wetherbee, Polly Wetherbee, Susan Piper, Lucinda Piper, Mary Faulkner, Charlotte Faulkner, Catharine Faulkner, Susan Faulkner, Clarissa Jones, Amasa Davis, Jessie Pierce, Uriah Foster, Alden Fuller, Jonathan Piper, Dr. Harris Cowdry.

Mr. Henry Skinner mentioned above married Mary Hayward, daughter of Simeon Hayward. It may interest some to know that in 1814, at a cost of two hundred and thirty dollars, she brought into Acton its first piano.

Rev. Moses Adams, the second minister, enjoyed the use of this new and spacious church during the last eleven years of his pastorate and

his life, and Mr. Shedd during the eleven years of his pastorate. The building stood for over fifty years. By court decision it came into the possession of the First Parish and this parish deeded it to the town June 4, 1859.

Even after the new meeting house, at a cost of ten thousand dollars, was to all superficial appearances complete, there were numerous details that demanded attention. In October of 1807 the ground around the building to a distance of forty feet was levelled for "stable ground" for the equipages of the citizenry Eventually horse sheds to the number of thirty or more were built.[1] Subsequent years saw the decoration of the pulpit and the building of a seat in front of it "to accomodate town business and the church";[2] the recording of pew deeds by the town clerk at ten cents per entry; the making of air holes in the underpinning to preserve the timbers; the purchase of a bell for $570 in 1811; and the engaging of John White to ring it upon all public occasions for eight dollars a year. It was also voted to have the bell rung each night at nine o'clock provided it could be done at no expense to the town. Apparently this desire to ring the bell was because the people enjoyed hearing it. The idea of a curfew is nowhere found in the records.

During the time taken for these operations other civic matters were afoot. In the spring of 1809 it was decided to sell the old first meeting house and a committee was appointed to determine the bounds and report at a later date. There is no record of the report of this committee nor of a similar one chosen in March of 1809. In April of 1810, however, a vote was passed to give to Rev. Moses Adams "the land where the old meeting house stood". Further evidence comes from a newspaper clipping in a family scrapbook quoting Mr. J. W. Tuttle as asserting that he was born in 1805, three years before the old meeting house was torn down. It appears safe to conclude therefore that the old first meeting house was razed either late in the year 1808 or during the year 1809 and removed from the premises upon which the Centre schoolhouse now stands.

Mention has previously been made of an Acton legend associated with the building of the second meeting house, the Brook's Tavern,

[1] A list of shed owners, as numbered by the selectmen, on Nov. 8, 1825 is given below:
1. Ebenezer Davis, 2. Ebenezer Davis, 3. Ebenezer Davis, 4. Stevens Hayward, 5. Simon Hosmer, 6. Mary Faulkner, 7. Aaron Jones, 8. Luther B. Jones, 9. Josiah Bright, 10. Benjamin Hayward, 11. William Reed, 12. Edward Wetherbee, 13. Ephraim Forbush, 14. Abel Jones, 15. Nathaniel Faulkner, 16, Nathan Hosmer, 17. William Stearns, 18. James Keyes, 19. Joseph Chaffiin, 20. Jonathan Billings, 21. Ephraim Billings, 22. Paul Dudley, 23. Amos Noyes, 24. Ebenezer Davis, 25. Seth Brooks, 26. Joanna Noyes, 27 Betsey Hayward, 28. L. Conant & J. Edwards, 29. Daniel White, 30. John Robbins.

[2] On December 14, 1807 the town voted twenty dollars to Aaron Jones as damages incurred by him in having his pew moved for this purpose.

and the Rocky Guzzle. It has been most interestingly recorded by Rev. Frederick Brooks Noyes, Acton native and a grand-son of Capt. Paul Brooks who was proprietor of the famous tavern at the time of the events about to be cited.[1]

The Brooks Tavern, a huge gambrel roofed structure, an excellent water color of which by the brush of Mr. Arthur Davis, hangs in the Memorial Library, stood on the level ground at the approximate site of the present residence of Norman Livermore, opposite the school house in Acton Centre. The older inhabitants used to assert that portions of the present building were made in part from wood taken from the old tavern.

At the time of the episode about to be given a system of turnpikes connected the centers of the three towns of Concord, Sudbury, and Acton leading to the three best known inns in Middlesex County, namely, Howe's Tavern in Sudbury (Longfellow's Wayside Inn), Wright's Tavern in Concord, and the Brooks Tavern in Acton. The names of these taverns often appeared in the early records of the three towns in connection with elections, training days and ordination dinners. A whole volume could be written concerning the Brooks Tavern alone and the persons of prominence that were sheltered under its roof, among whom were two presidents of the United States, William Lloyd Garrison and John Greenleaf Whittier, who incidentally planted a pear tree that was thriving at the turn of the century. Had Longfellow lived in Acton he would have found in the tales of the Brooks Tavern more than he found in those of the Wayside Inn.

Mr. Noyes obtained his information from Miss Elizabeth Brooks who was born in the historic old inn and was six years old at the time of the events in the tale.

Concerning the appearance of the inn itself Mr. Noyes makes the following comment:

"I remember the Brooks Tavern,

"As somewhat fallen to decay,
With weather stains upon the wall,
And chimneys high and tiled and tall."

The upper corner blocks of the front door frame were carved with concentric circles, a design we often see today in colonial architecture, but these blocks must have been out of all proportion to the casement, for the wooden rings of prodigious size. The effect was also greatly heightened by the singular fact that the circular spots remained white, while the rest of the building had grown black. When a boy, on my way to school I had to pass this house and I felt as if I were undergoing inspection by an old lady

[1] *New England Magazine*, Nov. 2, 1902.

wearing spectacles. The stare of those great eyes over the front door certainly made the inn more unreal and ghostly, for it gave the building an expression which only old age could acquire. Few were alive who could remember when it was used as a tavern but the tales that had come down in our family quickened my imagination, and had a strong historic influence over my early school days."

But to get on with the tale! When the group of sailors previously mentioned arrived by stagecoach and were lodged at the Brooks tavern they occasioned considerable interest. Among them was a man who, although a sailor with the rest, was obviously more than that. Even the village loafers could note the difference, quite apart from the fine and distinctive scarf which he wore. At the end of a fortnight the sailors departed, with the exception of the strange fellow with the scarf. He remained behind and wrote and received long letters, the incoming ones being from across the ocean. At times he borrowed the landlord's mare and rode down to the Rocky Guzzle where he was seen many times in conference with another horseman. This second rider was a bent and wizened old hermit, well known about the countryside, who lived in the first house along the bridle path leading from the Rocky Guzzle to Faulkner's mills. He was considered to be a pirate who had come to the same house twenty years previous at which time he was reputed to have buried treasure in the Guzzle.

One day in the autumn of 1807 the stagecoach swept up to the tavern with an unusual flourish and the bystanders were amazed to see emerge the second and sixth presidents of the United States. The landlord, having heard that they were in Concord, had ridden over and induced them to visit the Brooks Tavern. Whether the presence of the impressive stranger with the distinctive scarf was the factor in the episode is still undisclosed but it is not hard to conclude that in the maze of world politics then existing one thread could be traced to Acton. Paul Brooks may not have gone to Concord to extend the invitation solely on his own initiative. Neither is it likely that the two presidents would have altered their itenerary solely upon the request of a country tavern keeper. If he was sent he was assuredly a man of discretion since no whisper of explanation has come down to posterity.

Eventually the stranger, who by this time had come to be spoken of as the Count, disappeared, leaving no clue as to his destination or his future plans. The townspeople went about their business with only an occasional query as to who or where he might be. The one sincere mourner over his departure was the landlord's daughter Caroline who watched the arrival of each stagecoach with hope, and

each time met only with disappointment.

In the late autumn when the days were clear and frosty the coach one day approached with a clatter and drew up with a grinding of brakes as the driver hastened into the tavern bearing in his hands the Count's fine blue scarf which he had picked up by the roadside in the Rocky Guzzle It was hopelessly stained with blood The tavern loungers gossiped, the townspeople debated, and one broken female heart suffered, but all to no avail. Dozens of possible explanations were tossed hither and yon but the truth was not disclosed then or ever. His meetings with the pirate, the visit of the Adamses, the peculiarity of his association with the sailors-all were assessed and reassessed to unbelieveable lengths.

The year following this incident Capt. Paul Brooks sold the tavern and moved to Westmoreland, N. H. in which town his remains lie today. His widow and three daughters returned to Acton, and for four generations all these traditions have been handed down in the old Brooks house which is still standing, as in 1807, directly opposite the site of the church on which the young nobleman worked. It is said he often called there. Since the second meeting house burned in 1862 and the tavern was razed in 1873, this structure, now the residence of Mr. Howard Billings, is the only building on the Common connected with the tale.

Regardless of the details of the story there are, however, certain facts that cannot be gainsaid. When a prospective railroad line was surveyed in 1857 it ran through the Rocky Guzzle and the engineers, ordering some of the bank on the east side of the present highway removed, came upon a human skeleton and a few French coins. There is also the additional fact that after the discovery of the skeleton a descendant of the man with whom the old pirate had taken refuge drove regularly at sundown to the woods near the Guzzle, tied his horse to a tree, and passed the night in digging for buried gold. The holes he made were still visible at the turn of the century. There is reason to believe that his efforts were not in vain since shortly he paid off a large and long standing mortgage on his farm and at the time of his death left an estate of proportions which could in no way be otherwise explained.

Previous to the erection of the second meeting house the village at the center scarcely deserved the term since it embraced not more than half a dozen buildings. According to Fletcher there was the first meeting house and across the road from it the Brooks Tavern, kept successively by Daniel Brooks, his widow Caroline, and his son Paul; the parsonage built for Rev. Moses Adams, for many years called the Bullard place (now the residence of Gen. Edward McKinley); the house of Benjamin Brabrook, no longer standing but described as

a little easterly of the house of Edward Tuttle, built at the same time as the meeting house and now occupied by Norman Collins; the house of John White, blacksmith, located just west of the present town hall; a cottage house on the site of the present residence of C. A. Bancroft; and the house now occupied by Clark C. McElvein. To these must be added the old Brooks home previously mentioned (now the home of Howard Billings) and the Jones house (now the residence of Oliver D. Wood).

The building of the meeting house stimulated operations to the extent that in a short time the tavern, first occupied by Henry Durant, and afterwards by Silas Jones and Horace and Daniel Tuttle, was put up. This was burned in the great fire of 1862 but another hotel, later known as the Monument House, was erected on the same site by John E. Cutter. John and James Fletcher built a house where the Library now stands. The houses now occupied by Mr. Duren (formerly the Arthur Davis house) and the residence of Dr. Boardman (the Cyrus Dole place) came shortly afterward.

About this time Dr. Peter Goodnow built on the site of the Roger Crafts bungalow, the most pretentious mansion in town. For many years it was the residence of Mr. Stevens Hayward. This grand old homestead, with the two mighty horse chestnut trees which stood just outside the white boundary fence in the front, made an imposing addition to the common for over a century.

At a later date the store now serving Acton Centre was built and kept by Joseph W. Tuttle. Later merchants at the same stand were Francis Tuttle, James Tuttle, Rufus Holden, Daniel Jones, John Cutter and Emery Taylor, the latter being in possession for over sixty years.

As indicated by the list of musicians given for the second meeting house, music had long been an important item in Acton communal life. In consequence the town voted at the May meeting of 1807 to spend forty dollars for a singing school and designated Winthrop Faulkner, Simon Hosmer, Jonathan Billings, Abel Jones, and Silas Jones as a committee to set it up in the middle district school house. This was the beginning of a town sponsored project which continued for many years with financial support that varied according to the musical temper of the succeeding generations.

In order to make a coherent story of the meeting house battle it has been necessary to set aside temporarily some other events that will now be considered.

In the national election of 1804 Acton again went all out for the Jeffersonian or Republican party as against the Federalists by a vote of ninety six to fifteen.

In December of 1804 the town voted to put no obstacle in the way of the petition of Carlisle to be set off as a distinct town. In this

connection it will be recalled that Carlisle became a district of Acton in 1780.

Sometime during the year 1805 the Acton Light Infantry was organized with a membership of forty one including the officers. The following persons commanded the company up until 1830; Paul Brooks, Simon Hosmer, Abijah Hayward, Jonathan Hosmer, John Fletcher, John Handley, Jr., Simon Davis, Abel Furbush, George Tuttle and Thomas Brown. The company flourished for several years. The muster roll for 1810 when Daniel Piper was captain is intact in the town vault as is also the one for 1812 when Abel Jones was in command. In both cases the roll runs over fifty. Each man was paid fifty cents for each muster attended.

In 1809 a school committee of five was chosen and instructed to inspect the schools, the methods of teaching and determine the text books to be used. In 1810 the committee was further instructed to examine the schoolmasters and schoolmistresses as to qualifications.

The old north cemetery, which was taken over as a town responsibility in 1750, became the subject of some interesting legislation in 1811. At the April meeting the town appointed a committee to view the north cemetery and consider the question as to whether it needed enlarging. Early in May the committee made the following report:

> *The subscribers being on the Committee appointed to view the burying ground in the east part of the Town of Acton and to make report of the same, to report as follows (viz) that it is necessary to enlarge said burying grounds on the west side one rod wide and sixteen rods long and that the wall on the east side be removed to the west boundary line of the road.*
>
> *Acton May* 3, 1811
>
> Winthrop Faulkner
> Daniel White
> William Strang

A group of citizens of Carlisle, possibly being not aware of the action taken by Acton or possibly wishing to insure that Acton would not vote NAY on the proposition presented the following petition three days later.

Carlisle May the 6, 1811

To the inhabitants of the town of Acton.

> *Gentlemen*:-
>
> *Where as we the subscribers, inhabitants of the northwesterly part of the town of Carlisle, think it necessary that the burying ground in the northwesterly part of Acton, should be inlarged and inclosed with a stone wall round*

the same and a suitable gate made for the same as the northwesterly part of Carlisle was a part of the town of Acton and at that time a number of our relations and friends was buried in said burying grounds and we wish to make use of it for a burying ground in the future and it appears to us that the number of inhabitants in the town of Carlisle, that have commonly made use of said burying grounds are about the same number of the town of Acton, that make use of the burying ground, we therefore are willing to be at one half the expense in what may be needful to be done to said burying ground provided that the town of Acton will grant the northwesterly part of Carlisle the privilege of improving said burying in the future.

Gentlemen we are with respect yours.

Timothy Heald	John Heald
Isreal Hall	John Heald, Jr.
Nathan Parlin	Samuel Wheeler
Joseph Wheeler	Sam Boynton

Pursuant of the above the owner of the land in question, Mr. Jonathan Davis, made the following representation to the town:

To the inhabitants of the town of Acton.

Gentlemen: as the town chose a committee at last April meeting to view the burying ground in the northwesterly part of Acton, as the committee thinks it necessary to enlarge the burying ground on the west side of said burying ground one rod in width and about 16 rods in length as I the - - - am now the owner of the land on the west side of the burying ground for the respect that I have for the Town of Acton and the northwesterly part of Carlisle am willing to give the land one rod in width and 16 rods in length for the use burying ground providing the town of Acton and the northwesterly part of Carlisle will be at the expense of moving the wall and new setting the same.

Acton May the 6, 1811 Jonathan Davis

Evidently the vote was favorable for by 1812 the north burying ground had been completed and also, through the generosity of John Robbins, a third deed of land had been conveyed to the town for the enlargement of the cemetery now known as Woodlawn.

Also in 1812 the question arose as to whether the county of Middlesex should hold court in Concord only. Some of the cases were being tried in Cambridge. A committee from Concord sought the opinion of the voters of Acton and the response was unanimously in favor of having Concord the only shire town in the county.

With a new bell in the meeting house the people wanted to hear its voice upon every possible occasion. In consequence it was voted at the March meeting of 1812 that it be rung at noon for seven months during the spring and summer and at nine o'clock in the evening in the winter. This custom, with variations as to time of day, persisted for several decades.

The war of 1812 was not popular in Massachusetts, nor in the northeastern states in general. It was felt by a large number that the policies of the Republican government[1] under Madison were needlessly antagonistic to England and ignored the interests of New England.

In the gubernatorial election of 1810 the federal party was defeated and Elbridge Gerry, the Republican candidate, took over the office of chief magistrate. The legislature was Republican in both houses and under the direction of Mr. Gerry supported the war party in Washington without question. This could only raise apprehension in the minds of many. In order to insure his majority the governor distributed political favors to the faithful without stint and in addition saw to it that the congressional districts of the state, however queer they might be geographically, were safe politically. His opponents identified this technique by the term "Gerrymander" Despite this political dodge Acton remained solidly Republican in the election of 1811, casting 112 votes for Gerry and 15 for Gore. In the state at large, however, the race was close.[2]

By 1812 the lines were sharply drawn and the election was uncommonly animated. Much to the surprise of the Republicans, Caleb Strong, the federal party candidate was victorious by a margin of 1370, carrying, in spite of the gerrymander, the lower chamber of the legislature with him.[3] The change was reflected in Acton also where instead of the usual ratio of six or seven to one the vote for representative was less than two to one.[4]

So far did the divergence between the national and state government go that when in June of 1812 the declaration of war was declared, the house, by a vote of 406 to 240, expressed its opinion that the move was inexpedient and impolitic. Furthermore, when in July the secretary of war called for ten thousand militia from Massachusetts for general service the governor nullified the command. He did, however, require them to be prepared for local defense agreeable to the orders of their immediate officers.

[1] The modern reader should be aware that Madison's party was identified by three names, Republican, Democratic, and Jeffersonian.

[2] Elbridge Gerry 43,328, Christopher Gore 40,142.

[3] *Boston Centinel*, April 18, 1812, Caleb Strong 52696, Elbridge Gerry 51326.

[4] William Richardson 52, Asheal Stearns 33, Samuel Hoar 3.

At the April meeting of 1812 it was voted that the school committee should henceforth consist of seven members, one from each of the four districts and three at large. Acting on this basis the personnel of the committee was Deacon John White, Samuel Tuttle, Aaron Jones and Samuel Hosmer from the districts and at large Rev. Moses Adams, Dr. Samuel Young and James Jones.

In September the town decided to do itself proud on muster day and serve refreshments to the gorging point. The steward's list specified 200 pounds of beef, 50 pounds of cheese, 3 bushels of meal made into bread, 2 bushels of potatoes, 200 pickles and ten gallons of West India rum. Just what happened is not revealed but something went askew with the result that the next year the menu was repeated except that the rum ration was cut to two gallons.

In December the town voted to make good the wages of the soldiers ordered out in the recent war up to a limit of ten dollars provided the government does not pay them. Three years later it became necessary to live up to this promise to the amount of seven dollars for those who served the whole time.

Almost since the incorporation of the town it had been the opinion of some that cattle, horses, sheep, and swine should be permitted to run at large Even before the common was laid out the freedom of swine was looked upon with ill favor by an increasing number No sooner was the common an established fact than articles appeared in the warrant each year asking that it be a public grazing ground. Usually the vote was negative but in 1814 a slight variation was made in that the selectmen were empowered to decide the matter. For several decades to come the question reappeared but finally died for want of support, the final attempt being an article in the warrant for the April meeting of 1833.

By 1814 the behavior of the British navy off the Massachusetts coast had become so threatening that the militia was ordered to Boston as a preliminary measure. The Acton military company, the Davis Blues, was of this group. John C. Park, grandson of Rev. Moses Adams, was a boy at the time and he relates that the soldiers were wildly welcomed as they marched through the streets of Boston.[1] The fifer, Silas Piper, strained so hard trying to match the enthusiasm and bring honor to the corps and the town that he was taken with spitting of blood and had to return home. His was the only blood to flow in the campaign. The Acton company was the first of any in the regiment to report to headquarters, so that had there been a real conflict the men of the town would again have been in at the beginning even as they were thirty nine years before at Concord.

[1] Fletcher p. 277.

REPORT OF THE

SELECTMEN OF THE TOWN OF ACTON,

From Feb. 26, 1863, to Feb. 26, 1864.

Receipts.

Amount received, $20,146 90

Expenditures.

SUPPORT OF SCHOOLS.

Paid.

Jonas Blodget, for Centre School,	$335 43	
George C. Wright, for West School,	335 43	
Emerson F. Fuller, for South School,	335 43	
Daniel F Tarbell, for South East School,	199 44	
Isaac T Flagg, for North School,	199 44	
Joseph Esterbrook, for East School,	199 44	
		$1,604 61

REPAIRS ON SCHOOL HOUSES.

Paid.

For repairs on the Centre School House,	$18 87	
" " " West School House,	20 46	
" " " South School House,	29 56	
" " " South East School House,	11 50	
" " " North School House,	1 48	
" " " East School House,	1 40	
		$83 27

BOOKS AND PRINTING.

Paid.

For Printing Warrants,	$4 50	
" " Dog Notices,	1 00	
" " Selectmen's Report,	10 00	
" " 450 Pamphlet Reports,	66 25	
" " Town Record Book,	4 50	
" " Tax Books,	1 83	
		$87 58

ABATEMENT AND DISCOUNT ON TAXES.

Paid.

John E. Cotter Abatement on Taxes,	$14 83	
John E. Cotter, Discount on Taxes,	450 25	
		$465 08

ROADS AND BRIDGES.

Paid.

Hiram B Livermore, for breaking roads 84 hours,	$10 50	
Nehemiah Curtis, for breaking roads 13 hours,	1 62	
Joseph Noyes, for " " 27 "	3 37	
Daniel Harris, for " " 8 "	1 00	
Francis Kingsley, for repairs on highway,	7 69	
Cyrus Fletcher, for railing highway and repairing bridges,	11 97	
Simon Robbins, for repairs on highway,	7 91	
Silas Conant, for teaming stones for railing,	5 50	
Julius W Smith & Co., for pay for railing,	8 [illegible]	
		$58 57

APPROPRIATION FOR SOLDIERS AND FAMILIES.

Paid.

For State Aid,	$2,314 64	
Recruiting Expenses for 17 men,	1,718 00	
		$4,032 64

APPROPRIATION FOR TOWN BUILDINGS.

Paid

Town Hall building committee,		$6,165 79

SUPPORT OF POOR

Paid

Lois Dow, for keeping stranger,	$ 62	
For wood for Widow Lewis Choffin,	26 87	
" groceries for Widow Lewis Choffin,	10 26	
City of Boston, for support of Sarah Child,	8 75	
Town of Concord for burial expenses of Elmira Oliver,	5 00	
		$51 50

TOWN OFFICERS.

Paid

Edward F Richardson, for examining teachers, superintending schools, and writing reports,	$10 00	
James E. Billings, for services as Overseer of the Poor,	5 00	
James E. Billings, for two journeys to Cambridge, respecting Elmira Johnson,	4 00	
James E. Billings, journey to Boston respecting Sarah Childs and Adeline Robbins,	2 00	
James F. Billings, journey to Marlboro', respecting Eustace B Handley,	2 00	
Jonas K Putney, for services as Overseer of Poor	5 00	
J. K. W. Wetherbee, " " "	5 00	
William D Tuttle, 2 1-2 days taking Inventory	5 00	
Do., making and copying taxes,	12 00	
Wm. D Tuttle, for services as Town Clerk,	15 00	
Do., for collecting and recording 46 births,	9 20	
Do., " " " 62 deaths,	7 20	
Do., " " " 9 marriages,	90	
Do., making report and military record,	5 00	
Samuel Hosmer, for taking inventory and making taxes,	15 00	
Eben Davis, for do., do.,	15 00	
John E. Cutter, for collecting taxes for 1862,	70 00	
Jonas K. Putney, for services as Selectman,	8 50	
J. K. W Wetherbee, do., do.,	30 00	
James E Billings, do., do.,	86 00	
		$291 80

NOTES AND INTEREST.

Paid.

Joseph R. Vaxcoel, Note and interest,	$62 76	
George W. Parks, " " "	89 04	
Francis E. Harris, " " "	53 75	
Augustine Conant, Interest,	120 00	
Frederick Rouillard, "	30 00	
Daniel L. Veazey, "	6 00	
Daniel Harris, "	18 00	
Ebenezer Conant, "	180 00	
Joel Hanscom, "	40 80	
David M. Handley, "	12 00	
		$612 35

MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES.

Paid.

Levi Dow, for notifying dog owners to get their dogs licensed,	$1 50	
Levi Dow, for killing two dogs,	1 00	
Daniel H. Wetherbee, for services on town farm,	98 79	
For coffin for Michael Quinn,	4 50	
Concord Fire Engine Co.,	8 00	
Francis Kingsley, for stone posts for burying ground,	6 00	
Do., for building wall at the burying ground,	145 65	
For town pump,	7 75	
Wm. D. Tuttle, for stone posts for bounds and setting same on the common,	1 00	
For surveying and making plan and deed of land sold John Fletcher,	2 25	
Alonzo Tower, for damage caused by defective highway,	75 00	
For insurance on Town Hall while building,	53 50	
" " " " for five years,	150 00	
Albert T. Edmonds, for opening vestry for Town meetings,	2 00	
Do., for tolling bell for twenty deaths,	4 00	
Daniel Jones, for goods delivered Mrs. Harriet Robbins,	19 88	
James A. Balch, for tolling bell for four deaths,	80	
George Penny, " " five "	1 00	
Hiram J. Haggood, " " twelve "	2 40	
George E. Johnson, for burial straps,	2 50	
For furnace, settees, lamps, &c., for Town Hall,	480 88	
Luke Smith, for collecting and taking care of bell metal,	2 00	
Wm D Tuttle, for eight days' labor at burying ground,	10 00	
Francis Dwight, for coffin and robe for J. D. Ogle,	6 95	
Do., for burial of 42 persons,	82 86	
Do., for making return of 46 persons to Town Clerk,	4 00	
Henry M. Smith, [illegible]	18 00	
[illegible]	15 15	
[illegible] Wright, for notice for West School,	12 85	
[illegible]	4 00	
[illegible]	4 75	
		$1,283 12

Condition of the Treasury February 26th, 1864.

RECEIPTS.

Balance in the Treasury, Feb. 26, 1863,	$292 80
State Tax, 1863,	2,424 00
County Tax, 1863,	747 03
Town Grant, 1863,	4,000 00
Town Grant for Schools,	1,560 00
Overlay on Taxes,	365 48
Highway Deficiencies,	21 28
Dog Tax,	45 00
State Aid to Jan 1st, 1864,	2,315 01
State bounty for soldiers,	2,847 47
Town of Sudbury, for tuition,	40 00
Borrowed money,	5,846 27
Money from State for May training, 1863,	87 50
For old bell,	119 59
From State, for board of J. D. Ogle and M. Quinn,	13 00
Armory rent,	50 00
Town of Concord, for tuition,	20 60
For old iron and ashes,	21 25
State school fund,	74 00
	$20,146 90

EXPENDITURES.

For support of schools,	$1,604 61	
repairs on school houses,	83 27	
books and printing,	87 58	
abatement and discount on taxes,	465 08	
roads and bridges,	58 57	
appropriation for soldiers and families,	4,032 64	
" " Town buildings,	6,165 79	
support of poor,	51 50	
Town Officers,	291 80	
notes and interest,	612 35	
miscellaneous expenses,	1,283 12	
State tax,	2,424 00	
County tax,	747 03	
	$17,857 94	
Balance in Treasury Feb. 26, 1864,	$2,288 96	

FINANCIAL CONDITION OF THE TOWN FEB. 26, 1864.

Dr.

To balance as per report, Feb. 26, 1864,	$2,288 96	
amount due from the State for aid furnished families of soldiers,	2,870 92	
		$5,159 88

AMOUNT DUE ON NOTES.

Cr.

By Cash of Daniel Harris,	$305 34	
Eben Conant,	4,500 00	
Frederick Rouillard,	1,700 00	
Silas P Blodget,	795 27	
David M. Handley,	200 00	
Daniel L. Veazey,	100 00	
Mathew McKinney,	100 00	
Charles H. Blood,	100 00	
Joel Hanscom,	680 00	
Augustine Conant,	4,000 00	
Isaac T. Flagg,	100 00	
James Keyes, Jr.,	600 00	
John Wood,	500 00	
Elbridge J. Robbins,	500 00	
Interest on Notes,	570 24	
	$15,250 85	
Balance against the Town Feb. 26, 1864, without including the balance due as per Overseers' report for 1864,	$10,090 97	

AMOUNT OF STATE AID PAID EACH PERSON

Paid

Mrs. Charlotte M. Pike,	$144 00
Maria Fisk,	144 00
Sally Veazey,	144 00
Betsey M Sawyer,	144 00
Betsey Sheban,	144 00
Hattie S. Jackson,	144 00
S. H. Wetherbee,	144 00
Rosa Miner,	144 00
Margaret Fitzpatrick,	144 00
Rebecca C. Wright,	116 00
Joanna Moulton,	104 00
Catherine Dwelley,	60 00
Henrietta Oaks,	52 00
Nancy Huggins,	52 00
Charlotte Blood,	52 00
[illegible]	[illegible]
Sarah J. Fish,	52 00
Sarah J. Skinner,	52 00
Martha Wayne,	52 00
Berintha W Sawyer,	97 43
Eliza W. Reed,	[illegible]
Sarah Callahan,	36 [illegible]
Huldah Moulton,	36 00
Mary A. Baldwin,	26 00
Helen M. Clark,	26 00
L. W. Bowers,	25 00
F. L. Whitcomb,	25 28
Sarah A. Hutchins,	13 14
H. C. Holden,	13 14
Maria Morrill,	13 14
Eliza Kingsley,	78 29
Fannie Parker,	52 57
N. F Chaplin,	13 14
	$2,911 04

JAMES E BILLINGS
JONAS K PUTNEY
J. K. W WETHERBEE } Selectmen of Acton

B. TOLMAN, PRINTER, CONCORD.



THE OLD MONUMENT HOUSE

The list of the Davis Blues who went to Boston, as copied from the original pay-roll in the handwriting of the clerk of the company, Deacon John Fletcher, is given herewith. The document itself hangs in the Memorial Library.

Silas Jones (Capt.)	John Conant
James Jones (1st. Lt.)	John Chaffin
Aaron Hayward (2nd. Lt.)	Joseph T. Chamberlain
Jonathan Hosmer (Ensign)	Ezekiel Chamberlain
John Fletcher (Clerk)	Luther Davis
Samuel Conant	John S. Fletcher
John Hendley (Handley)	Abel Forbush
Silas Piper, Jr. (Fifer)	Silas Hosmer
Paul Conant (bass drum)	Moses Hayward
Abner Wheeler (small drum)	Nathaniel Hapgood
Luke Hayward	John Harris
James Fletcher, Jr. (brother to the clerk)	James Keyes
	George Robbins
Jonathan B. Davis	Joseph Robbins
James Hayward	John D. Robbins
Joseph Barker, 2nd.	William Reed, 3rd.
Jonathan Billings, Jr.	Allen Richardson
Ephraim Billings	Jonathan Wheeler
Josiah Bright	Samuel Whitney
James Conant	Oliver Wetherbee
Joel Conant	Nathan D. Hosmer

In addition to these the graves of the following in Acton cemeteries carry War of 1812 markers:

Aaron Hapgood	Silas Taylor
Reuben Barker	Nathaniel Stearns
Francis Piper	Leonard Bulette

One marker at an unidentified grave.

Furthermore the Acton vital records list Elijah Knapp as a soldier of the War of 1812, and also Samuel P. Brown, aged twenty two, listed as having died in 1814 in the army.

It was in this same year, 1814, that the effect of the religious tension throughout New England began to be obvious. Not all was harmony in the First Parish even though it did have a fine new meeting house that was only seven years old. To be sure, it was to continue for some time yet but there were those in the community who entertained views on theology unpleasing to the stalwarts of the old First Parish. A movement was on foot that was to make the meeting house of 1807 the last building to be erected for religious purposes by the whole town, and even it was not to finish its days as a place of worship. An

article in the town warrant in 1814 placed before the voters the decision as to whether the meeting house should be opened to any responsible persons applying for it. The records do not indicate the debate that ensued but the final decision was that the matter be left to the discretion of the selectmen. A similar article under discussion in April of 1821 was dismissed but ten years later, in May of 1831, a committee of five was chosen to, "divide the use of the meeting house for the accomodation of the inhabitants".[1]

The details of the organization of the various church bodies in Acton will be found in Appendix XIV. Suffice it to say here that the crux of the matter lay in the agitation that had been formenting for years over the tie-up between church and state. Presumably the early settlers departed from England to avoid the excesses of the established religion but hardly had they become a fixture in their new circumstances than they set up a form of government that was to all practical purposes an ecclesiastical oligarchy. For many years the franchise was granted solely to members of the Puritan faith, which was recognized by the General Court as the state church. This was by no means peculiar to Massachusetts or New England. A part of Thomas Jefferson's life work was combatting the same thing in a different form in Virginia. In Massachusetts it finally culminated in a set of conditions where any who dissented were taxed for a church they did not attend and were deprived at the same time of a vote in civil affairs.

In consequence a long and bitter struggle was waged in the courts and the legislative halls of Massachusetts until finally in 1833 the separation of church and state became an established law in the form of a constitutional amendment. During these years people thought much concerning religious matters and split into various groups according to their turn of mind. All who were not Puritans were known as Dissenters and had, until 1833 the difficult task of building houses of worship for themselves while at the same time paying tax to the state church. Despite these drawbacks, however, a great religious awakening swept over the land and dotted the New England hills with innumerable meeting houses, modest perforce, but backed by strong purpose and the zeal of the Lord.

Miss Evelyn Knowlton handles this condition of affairs very aptly in her brochure published at the centennial of the Baptist Church in West Acton.[2]

[1] Daniel Barker, John Chaffin, Winthrop E. Faulkner, Robert Chaffin, Francis Tuttle.
In September of 1825 the town voted to refuse the use of the meeting house to Rev. Mr. Dean even though he was willing to adjust his time to avoid conflict with town usage.

[2] See Appendix XIV.

Another facet of this sectarian controversey was the experience of Rev. Marshall Shedd, successor of Rev. Moses Adams. Mr. Adams died on October 13, 1819 and was buried three days later, exactly seventy years after his birth. By his written request no sermon was preached at his funeral.

On February 20, 1820 Mr. Shedd, a native of Newton and a graduate of Dartmouth of the class of 1817, was unanimously invited by the church to become its pastor. Five hundred dollars was offered as a settlement, which was increased by private subscription and the salary was fixed at six hundred dollars plus fifteen cords of wood. In case of permanent disability the salary was to be reduced to two hundred dollars. The offer was accepted and on May 10th Mr. Shedd was ordained.[1]

The ordaining council consisted of Mr. Willard of Boxborough; Mr. Newell of Stow; Mr. Greenough of Newton; Mr. Litchfield of Carlisle; Dr. Ripley of Concord; Dr. Homer of Newton; Mr. Foster of Littleton; Dr. Holmes of Cambridge; Mr. Blake of Westford; Dr. Pierce of Brookline; Mr. Noyes of Needham; Mr. Hulbert of Sudbury with delegates from their respective churches. That such a combination of religious opinion could be found in an ordaining council obtained by a unanimous vote of both church and congregation was remarkable for that period.

Mr. Shedd was a pious, peaceable and exemplary minister, possessed of more than ordinary industry and talent. With such an auspicious introduction to his field of endeavor his efforts should have met with success. In the strained posture of the public mind, however, parochial difficulties multiplied apace and Acton was sucked into the maelstrom of irritation of the epoch. Mr. Shedd labored manfully to harmonize the divergent elements but the lines were too sharply drawn so he bowed to the inevitable and requested a release.

He felt that in the new settlements of northern New York his talents would find better opportunity for application. Pursuant to his desire the corporation, which was now called a parish, granted his request in May of 1831, and in the same month the agreement was confirmed by an ecclesiastical council.

However much of a rift there was among the citizenry on the matter of religious dogma there was small doubt as to the solidarity of the political mind of the times. The votes for governor and lieutenant governor for five successive years are impressive.

1825 For governor, Levi Lincoln 117, Luther Conant 1,
For Lt. governor, Marcus Morton 117, opponent 0.

[1] Fletcher, p. 250. Such a crowd was anticipated at the ceremonies that a committee of five was chosen to shore up the floor of the meeting house. It was also voted to have printed 300 copies of the ordination proceedings.

1826 For governor, Levi Lincoln 123, Thomas Winthrop 1
For Lt. governor, Thomas Winthrop 116, opponent 0.
1827 For governor, Levi Lincoln 86, William Jarvis 81,
For Lt. governor, Thomas Winthrop 145, William Jarvis 1.
1828 For governor Levi Lincoln 124, Sabine Burroughs 1,
For Lt. governor, Thomas Winthrop 104, Ward Haskell 1.
1829 For governor, Levi Lincoln 114, Marcus Morton 1,
For Lt. governor, Thomas Winthrop 113, Samuel Hubbart 1,
Marcus Morton 1.

Religious strife did not take up all the time of the people during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. It was in 1815 that one of the most important business ventures in the history of Acton was started. John Fletcher, at first a country trader in a small way, began the manufacture of boots and shoes. Associated with his two sons, John and Edwin, the project thrived and provided employment for many in the village. The shoe shop stood on a site just a few yards in front of the new firehouse and slightly toward Main Street. Eventually the small unit factory went out of existence all over the country under the pressure of the machine age. In its final years the building was used as a general store by Mr. Woodman who came to town as a stranger and set up in a short lived and unsuccessful competition with Mr. Emery Taylor.

On September 23, 1815 Acton had its first recorded tornado or Great Blow as it was called at the time. It came from the east and wrecked several of the horsesheds at the meeting house and wrought particular havoc among the woodlots on the southwest side of Nehemiah's Hill and east of the Great Road. The damage was estimated at forty thousand dollars.

Before the town could recover from this misfortune it encountered, along with the rest of New England the wierd year of 1816 which came to be known as the year without a summer.[1] This was no misnomer for a few cool weeks but a true description of the most amazing spell of weather in New England annals.

January and February were unduly mild, so much so in fact that aside from the kitchen fire for cooking purposes no other heat was required. The change came in May when ice half an inch thick formed on puddles and sheltered coves. June was the coldest ever experienced. Ten inches of snow fell in Vermont and three inches in Massachusetts. Seeds froze in the ground time after time. On July 5th ice as thick as ordinary window glass was common throughout New England, and to cap it all half inch ice again appeared in August at least once. The seed crops were not only ruined — they never ap-

[1] Newspaper clipping from an old scrapbook of Anna Laws (1855-1932) long since deceased, a descendant of Acton's first settlers.

peared — and corn held over from 1815 sold at five dollars a bushel. From this experience came the saying, "eighteen hundred and froze to death".

As has already been pointed out the wife of Capt. Isaac Davis married twice subsequent to his death. In October of 1802 she married Francis Leighton of Westford, the marriage taking place in Westford. He died in 1806 and the widow returned to Acton and resided for a time again in the house she formerly occupied, namely the one now owned by Oliver D. Wood.

In 1818 being then seventy one years of age and without funds Mrs. Leighton made an attempt to secure a pension. For decades this was not commonly known. It happened that some old documents were unearthed in an obscure place in the files of the House of Representatives by Mr. Walter French. There is mention made of an agent acting in the case but, whatever his qualifications otherwise, speed was not one of them for the attempt failed and the widow of Acton's great hero had to wait twenty three years before her pension was finally secured over sustained opposition.

Among the papers was the petition of Mrs Davis, signed in a trembling hand and worded as follows:

To the honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled A.D. 1818.

Humbly shews Hannah Leighton of Acton, in the County of Middlesex and Commonwealth of Massachusetts. That your petitioner was the wife of Capt. Isaac Davis who killed in Concord by the British troops on the memorable 19th of April, A. D. 1775 while commanding his company of infantry. That in consequence of this dispensation your petitioner was left a widow with four small children and almost destitute of property. That although a provision was made by Congress for an allowance to the widows and children of officers killed in the service, yet owing to your petitioner's ignorance of the mode to obtain it and not having at the time friends to attend to the business in season, neither she nor her children ever obtained anything from the United States on account of the provision. That your petitioner has now arrived at the age of seventy one years and is poor, and without freinds of ability to provide for her support, and unable to provide a subsistance by her manual labor. Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that Congress would take her case into consideration and make her an allowance to cheer her declining years, in consideration of the irreparable loss she sustained in the death of her husband, who was among the first who fell in his Country's cause. And in duty bound will ever pray.

Jan'y 1818 HANNAH LEIGHTON

On the back of the petition were three indorsements made at Acton

as follows: Acton, January 1818

We the subscribers, selectmen of said town, hereby certify that the facts set forth in the within petition are true.

JOSEPH ROBBINS
JOSEPH NOYES
AARON HAYWARD

The facts stated in the preceding petition are in my belief true, and that said Capt. Isaac Davis when shot dead was leading his company which made the first fire upon the enemy at the commencement of the revolutionary war, in the morning of that day.

MOSES ADAMS, Minister of Acton.

January 12, 1818

Acton, January 12 1818

I the subscriber certify that I was Sergeant in Capt. Davis'es Company at Concord when said Davis fell and assisted in carrying the corpse off the field and further certify that the facts in the Petition is true.

SETH BROOKS

A memorandum on the back of the petition shows that on January 19, 1818 it was referred to the committee on pensions and Revolutionary claims. The committee, however, did not feel disposed to do anything until convinced by additional testimony of the truth of Hannah Leighton's statements. This additional proof was secured by Mr. John Keyes of Concord who apparently worked hard in the matter. Two months later Mr. Keyes wrote to Timothy Fuller member of Congress, saying

"Enclosed you will find an affidavit by Seth Brooks and John Robbins Esq and a copy of the record of marriage of Mrs. Leighton.

Mrs. L's agent has sent to the Secty's office but there is no papers in that office relative to allowances to soldiers of any descript or their widows, and he could not get a certificate. He was referred to the Governor, as he told me, and his Excellency was to write you this day upon the subject as a substitute for the certificate. I hope this letter and the enclosed will prove what the committee may want to satisfy them that the facts stated in Mrs. L's petition are true."

The affidavit of Seth Brooks, which was made before Judge Keyes, justice of the peace, and dated at Concord March 7, 1818 read as follows:

> *I, Seth Brooks of Acton, in the County of Middlesex and Commonwealth of Massachusetts testify and say that I was a non-commissioned officer in the company commanded by Isaac Davis of said Acton in the year* 1775. *That on the nineteenth day of April in the said year, said Davis marched his company to meet a party of British troops sent from*

Boston to Concord. That said Davis with his company met the British troops in Concord, when the British troops fired on said Davis' company and killed said Davis, while he was leading on his company, and in the discharge of his duty as Captain of the same. I saw said Davis when he breathed his last and gave orders to have his body carried to a neighboring house.

SETH BROOKS

The copies from the town records of Acton is affixed as follows

Isaac Davis and Hannah Brown, both of Acton, were married by the Rev'd John Swift, October 24th. A.D. 1764

Copy of record attest.

JOHN ROBBINS, Town Clerk

Acton, March 6, 1818

I, John Robbins testify and say that the widow Hannah Leighton of Acton, is the same person as mentioned in the record above by the name of Hannah Brown. That I know her to be the wife of Capt. Isaac Davis who was killed on the 19th of April 1775 *in Concord by the British troops.*

JOHN ROBBINS

Sworn to before John Keyes.

The letter of Gov. Brooks to Mr. Fuller is dated at Medford, March 11, 1818. In it he says

I have this day been requested to write to you in behalf of the widow of the late Capt. Isaac Davis of Acton, who was killed on the 19th of April 1775, *in the memorable action fought between the Massachusetts militia and the British troops at Concord. I comply with the request with great pleasure although I can say but little of that particular case. But I am confident that this widow has never had any provision made for her or her children by the state or the national government. Indeed, the same observation may be extended to the widow of Col. Buttrick, who fell in the same battle with Capt. Davis and to the widows of all others who fell on that day. I can, I confess, see no reason why the families of those brave men who sacrificed their lives on that trying day are not entitled to equal consideration with the families of those who have since fallen. To me it would be extremely gratifying to see some public acknowledgement of the merit of those gallant spirits who first volunteered their services in the ranks and shed their blood in the cause of American liberty. I am very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant.*

J. BROOKS

In admitting his ignorance of the matter the governor immediately proves it by confusing Major John Buttrick with Col. James Barrett and asserting that he, the man he has in mind, was killed at Concord Fight. He is wrong on both counts since Col. James Barrett died April 11, 1779. Major John Buttrick eventually became a colonel and his tombstone puts his demise as of May 16, 1791.

This completes the case so far as the old papers in the files are concerned but the printed records show that nothing came of the original petition and that the matter slept for nine congresses before anything was done. Then the facts were revived and the bill giving her a pension, one year before her death, was passed in the closing hours of the Congress in 1841 and was signed by President Van Buren.

In 1821 the population of Acton was 1047. There were 140 dwelling houses, 230 other buildings, 513 acres of tillage land on which were raised 705 bushels of rye, 932 of oats, 5833 of corn, 75 of barley, 140 of beans. There were 1527 acres of mowing land producing 956 tons of hay; 2026 acres of pasturage keeping 939 cows, 196 oxen; 2055 acres of woodland, 3633 acres of unimproved land and 1311 acres unimprovable; 240 acres used as roads, and 500 acres of lakes, ponds and streams.

In 1826 Josiah Holbrook, whose chief interest was natural science, organized at Millbury, Mass. the first American Lyceum. It was in reality a school of adult education. In three years there was at least one in every state. The avowed purpose of the movement was the "diffusion of useful knowledge". A generation later Wendell Phillips was the outstanding speaker. Acton, with its fine meeting house, was early among the towns to make use of this opportunity for cultural improvement.

At this time the town was a beehive of small industry. New comers arrived bringing with them their families until the school problem became acute. The state school census of 1826 credits Acton with 412 pupils, all in the elementary classification it must be remembered, since there was at the time no high school. This will open the eyes of the modern reader when it is pointed out that the town report for 1950 lists only 380 below high school age, and this with more than three times the total population of 1826.[1]

As a result of the situation it was voted in 1826 to divide the east part of the town into two districts and to build two new school houses of brick. Francis Tuttle, Theodore Reed and Benjamin Wilde were chosen as a committee to establish the line between east and south east provided the residents could not agree. Regardless of this precaution it was decided at a special town meeting on

[1] 227 males, 185 females; 139 less than age 7, 160 from 7 to 14, 113 over 14.

September 18th to reconsider all foregoing action on the matter and put it on the agenda for the following November. In the meantime the selectmen had purchased the bricks and other material pursuant of town order. Hence it was necessary to instruct them to take care of the supplies until further notice. The town records make no mention of any further action in the matter until May 13, 1839 at which time it was voted to build two new school houses of brick, one in the north and one in the east, "provided they can decide where to build it". A second vote taken at the same time specified that the houses were to be finished before 1840. This decision was not fullfilled since in April of 1840 an article seeking to prevent the building of the east school was dismissed. This would certainly imply that it had not been erected up to that time, and so far as can be discovered it never was built, despite the dismissal of the article. Viewed from the present it appears that the north school house was built sometime during the year 1839 and that sufficient pressure was brought to bear subsequently to put a quietus on the other one.

In 1828 Acton reached the dignity of a post office. Silas Jones was the first postmaster.

Early in 1828 agitation began in the state for the formation of a new county. A Mr. Jewett and others sought to have the towns of Royalston, Winchendon, Athol, Templeton, Gardner, Westminster, Ashburnham, Fitchburg, Leominster, Lunenburg, Princeton, Hubbardston, Phillipston, Lancaster, Bolton, and Harvard taken from Worcester county and combined with the towns of Groton, Shirley, Pepperell, Ashby, and Townsend of Middlesex county to form the new unit. The petition did not prevail in the several towns concerned. The Acton vote was 11 in favor and 41 against the measure.

It was in 1828 also that the town took a renewed interest in the care of the poor. A committee was chosen to look at several farms with a view to buying and to make report at a subsequent time. It developed that three farms had been offered to the town for prices ranging from twenty two hundred dollars to thirty seven hundred. None of them were acceptable at the figures quoted and in consequence it was eventually decided to let out the care of the poor to Silas Piper, he being the lowest bidder, for three years at two hundred and ninety seven dollars per year.

In this connection it is interesting to note that one of the paupers was Ephraim Billings, a member of Isaac Davis's company at Concord Fight. It appears that he was not a constant boarder with the aforesaid Silas Piper but flitted in and out of town as the whim struck him. That being the case, the town stipulated at the May meeting of 1829 that Piper should reimburse the town seventy five cents each week the said Billings was absent. This went on until

December when an ultimatum was issued to the effect that Billings return to Acton and stay there or support himself elsewhere. Since the offender was seventy eight at the time it is to be presumed that he obeyed the ukase and spent the rest of his days in tolerable if not superlative mental composure.

It was at about this time that Mr. Asa Dodge Smith, a graduate of Dartmouth of the class of 1830 established in Acton a private school which ran with some success for a while. He graduated from the Andover Theological Seminary in 1834 and went immediately to the Brainerd Presbyterian Church in New York City where he remained for twenty nine years. This was his only parish since he left it in 1863 to become president of Dartmouth College. He was a man of great dignity, self possessed, and remarkably fluent of speech. He died in 1877.

At its March meeting in 1832 the town broke a custom that had endured for nearly a century when it voted to dispense in the future with the May meeting. This was a particularly important move because the May meeting had been the time for voting for the state officers and for bringing before the town the annual budget insofar as one existed. This action was precipitated because the state election date was at that time (May 11, 1831) changed to the first Monday in November. It was later defined as the Tuesday next following the first Monday in November.

An event of even greater import, however, was the organization of the Evangelical church and the bringing into Acton of Rev. James Trask Woodbury as its first pastor. He was an able preacher and a dynamic citizen but his great contribution to the town, which none could then envision, was to be the Davis Monument which now graces the beautiful common.

On the twenty third of February, 1832, at a meeting of the church it was voted that thirteen male members and forty six females should be, according to their own request, dismissed from the First Church and be recommended to the care of an ecclesiastic council for the purpose of being formed into a church in connection with the Evangelical Society of Acton.[1]

The worship of this group was first in a chapel built for the purpose, later for many years used as a two family dwelling, but now the property of the Acton Centre Women's Club. On March 17, 1832 the church was organized by a council and Mr. Woodbury was ordained and installed the same day.

Mr. Woodbury was not only a man of large stature and commanding personality but also a man of great courage and ability. He was positive, frequently tactless, but beloved withal because of his

[1] For a brief history of the Evangelical Church see Appendix XIV.

integrity and humanity. He lived at the end of the street, now named for him, in the house at present occupied by the Putnam family. He is credited with saying that he liked to be out where there was plenty of room so he could shout as loudly as he pleased.

As a reformer Mr. Woodbury's gifts were conspicuous on the platform. His humor and pathos and passion and wit, his bluntness, quaintness, and oddities, his independent honesty and high purpose gave him a foremost rank as an anti-slavery and temperance advocate.

The whole town revived under his ministry. The houses and farms and shops and roads and schools that had languished under the blight of intemperance took on a new lease of prosperity.

He cared nothing for the prevailing style in clothes. Because he so desired he wore a broad brimmed hat, loose fitting coats and pants, carried a blue umbrella instead of black, had boots with soles projecting half an inch beyond the upper, and, clad in a farmer's frock, with pants tucked into his boots, drove his oxen through the village whenever it suited his convenience.

But woe to the adversary in political or religious debate who esteemed him to be a country bumpkin. Aside from being an able preacher and orator he was a lawyer, having graduated from Harvard in 1823 and having passed the New Hampshire bar in 1826. In the years ahead more than one overweening member of the Massachusetts legislature was to learn to his chagrin that "Priest Woodbury" was a far abler rough and tumble antagonist than his eccentricities indicated.

In the election of 1834 he was a candidate for representative in Congress and in Acton polled fifty two votes to twenty eight for his nearest competitor in a field of five.

On the 19th of January, 1835, the question of having the town purchase the chapel (now the Women's Club) was presented to the town meeting "at such price as shall be made known at the meeting". The matter was laid over until March at which time the article was dismissed never to be resurrected.

In May following it was voted to pay for having the meeting house bell tolled for deaths, funerals, Sundays, Lenten fast, and town meetings The tolling at deaths could be quite a chore since it was customary to stroke off the age of the deceased, hesitate for a few seconds, and then ring a specified number of times to indicate the sex of the departed. It has been alleged by some of the old timers that certain of the undertakers of the period used to station one or more of the children at a favorable listening post when it was known that a stricken neighbor was shortly to be in need of a coffin. It was not thought unduly strange if the undertaker visited the chamber of approaching death and went to work with tape measure and note

book while the erstwhile corpse dictated the specifications.

Two or three events of the year 1835 are particularly worthy of mention. The first is the starting of the powder mills on the short stretch of the Assabet River that cuts across the extreme southeast corner of the town.[1] Nathan Pratt put in the dam and operated the mills until 1864. They were then sold to the American Powder Company in a merger with the Massachusetts Powder Mills located at Barre, Mass. The business grew and the plant with its attendant storage houses spilled over into Sudbury, Concord (and eventually into what is now Maynard) to cover an area of more than four hundred acres. In 1883 the company became the American Powder Mills, hiring some sixty men to make the powder and to collect from the surrounding swamp country the willow wood to make prime charcoal.

Explosions that shattered a few window panes as far away as Acton Centre while not common were by no means unheard of. Anyone who had lived in the vicinity for twenty five years had almost certainly experienced two or three.

About 1900 smokeless powder mills were added to the plant. During the first World War the output was under contract with Russia and Russian inspectors were in attendance. In 1940, or thereabouts, the manufacture of powder ceased and the property went into the hands of the American Cyanamid Co. At present the largest industry using the area is the Dewey & Almy Chemical Co., manufacturers of synthetic rubber. Several other companies, including the Eastern States Farmer's Exchange; the Technical Products Co.; the Maynard Building Supply Co.; the R. & H. Co. and one or two others utilize the buildings adjacent to the dam.

The second event was the Centennial Celebration which took place on July 21, 1835. The orator of the occasion was the Hon. Josiah Adams of Framingham, a native of Acton and its ardent champion to the end of his days. His speech was a long one in which he reviewed the history of the town in considerable detail, particularly with respect to the events that transpired at Concord Bridge.[2] The following excerpt indicates the tenor of his remarks:

> *"Without deeming it of much importance to consider the relative times and places of the events of that day, I shall contend that Isaac Davis was the life and soul of the action, in advancing to the bridge at Concord; and that it is reason able to believe that, had he lived, the events of the conflict, in the morning, would have given a character to the Concord Fight much above what, now, it can be made to assume.*

[1] Fletcher, 272,294.
[2] *Historical Papers*, vol. 2, Acton Library.

This matter will be dwelt upon more particularly, because the voice of Acton, in regard to it, has never been heard. The scene of action being Concord, it was natural for history to presume that the spirit of resistance was born there. It is true that Capt. Davis is mentioned by historians as commanding the company in front; and there is no reason, in general, to complain of the manner in which his courage and conduct have been treated. But how it happened that a captain — lower in rank than the commanders of the Concord minute men — belonging to another town, and having no property nor defenseless friends in the village to need his protection — was placed in the front, has never, it is believed been truly explained by any historian. And perhaps this might not have been deemed a fit occasion for making the explanation if a representative, from a very respectable source, had not been published within a few years, entitled. 'A History of the Fight at Concord', in which an explanation is given at the expense of the good sense, the modesty, and the courage of Capt. Davis.

It is in vain to disguise it. It cannot be denied that all that was done before the British left the village was done before Davis was killed. From that moment nobody had any command and nothing was even attempted. What became of Col. Barrett, Major Buttrick or Col. Robinson nobody has told us, . . . The truth is, it was said so at the time, and ever since, that, when Capt. Davis arrived on the ground no one would agree to go in front. When he arrived they took courage. His spirit was known and they relied on it. And I repeat, that the soul of the action on that morning was the soul of Isaac Davis; and when that soul fled the action was over."

Adams' speech made a great impression, so much so that at the March meeting of 1836 it was voted to give a printed copy to all who had paid poll tax and were of age, also to all heads of families, male or female, and to all poor not able to pay a tax, and that six copies be lodged with the town clerk.

Furthermore it was voted that a committee consisting of the town clerk, the selectmen and certain others take the depositions of Hannah Leighton (widow of Isaac Davis), Solomon Smith, Thomas Thorp, and Charles Handley relative to the events of April 19th, 1775, to which they were eye witnesses.

There exists no known record of the precise exercises nor of the personages present but almost certainly as many as possible of the survivors of Davis' company were honored guests. Those who were

then living and could have attended, health permitting, were Solomon Smith, aged 82; Thomas Thorp, aged 80; Benjamin Hayward, aged 83; Moses Wood, aged 85; and Joseph Chaffin, aged 83. Of these only one was to survive as much as three years, namely Thomas Thorp, who was to live for fourteen years more.

A few days later Mr Edward Everett, the great Massachusetts orator, spoke at Lexington and in that speech he exhibited the powder horn of James Hayward and made the observation that he had been requested by Mr. Stevens Hayward of Acton, nephew of its wearer, to present it for the inspection of those present and to mention its history. This was particularly apropos since Hayward was shot on Lexington soil.[1] Mr. Stevens Hayward was moved to make the request by Rev. Mr. Woodbury.

Ever since the inception of the school board it had been the custom for each member to run things to suit himself in his own district. In 1836, however, the board as a whole made its first annual report. The report was made orally in town meeting but even so it was the beginning of coordinated action in the matter of school management for the town.

In 1837 an event took place which in this day and age seems incredible. The state announced that it had surplus revenues which it was returning to the various towns pro rata. Acton decided to use the money toward the purchase of a poor farm and chose Francis Tuttle, William Reed, and Luther Conant as a committee to purchase a farm, at a price not in excess of the state refund, if and when the final payment had been made by the state.

Also in the same year we find the first mention of a state fund for education. The town voted that the selectmen be a committee to receive the money and to divide it among the school districts as was the locally raised money.

In June of 1838 it was brought to the attention of the town that certain persons were infringing upon the common, not only by trespass in feeding stock but also in the erection of fences enclosing public property. The selectmen had the lines surveyed by Caleb Fuller of Groton and by town action were ordered to secure deeds immediately.

In March of 1839 a movement was begun which continued at intervals for a score of years, namely, an attempt to have the meeting house of 1807 either torn down or remodelled to accomodate a town hall and school. Up until 1857 the respective articles bearing on the point were either dismissed or laid on the table.

It would appear that the money refunded to the town by the state did not prove adequate to purchase a farm since in February of 1839 it was again voted to obtain a poor farm at a price not to exceed six

[1] *Niles Register* XLVIII, 170-171 (May 9, 1835)

hundred dollars above the surplus. Francis Tuttle, Edward Wetherbee, and Silas Jones were chosen as a committee to conclude the details. Apparently the committee acted with dispatch to the annoyance of certain persons because at the March meeting there was much debate, several motions to reconsider actions taken in past meetings, as well as reversals of opinion within the same meeting. Out of it all emerged at last a decision to use the state money and instruct the treasurer to give surety for the balance.

A month later two conflicting articles came up for consideration. One envisioned the expediture of four hundred dollars for stock and tools and the making of the town farm a "house of industry";[1] the second proposed that the farm just purchased be sold. The first article prevailed and the second was deferred until the next meeting. The matter did not come up at all at the next meeting due to reasons unknown but in November of 1841, two years later, a committee was chosen to hire a man to operate the town farm so apparently the obstructionists were finally overcome.

At the April meeting of 1840 the town voted to set out trees on the common and chose Francis Tuttle, John Fletcher, Winthrop E. Faulkner, John White, Nathan Brooks, Simon Tuttle, and Rufus Holden as a committee in charge. The trees were to consist of rock maple, buttonwood, elm and white ash. As a result of the vote the committee extended a general invitation to all inhabitants to bring in suitable samples of the types mentioned on the 20th of April, since that year the 19th fell on a Sunday. The people responded heartily and arrived on the specified day with an abundance of satisfactory specimens. Most of them survive to this day but had it not been for the diligent care given them by Deacon John Fletcher and Francis Tuttle during the severe drought of the summer of 1840 the story would have been far different. Some of them did die and in April of 1841 the two men just mentioned together with Horace Tuttle were delegated by the town to take care of any necessary replacements.[2] Most of the rock maples that now stand on Main St. and Newtown Road were set out in 1859 as an afterthought to the beautifying of the common. One huge black walnut tree that measured better than fourteen feet around the trunk stood at the turn of the century just in front of the house of Mr. E. Faulkner Conant[3]; an almost equally large chestnut stood close by the stone guide board at the junction of Main St. with Nagog Hill Rd. but is succumbed to the blight that swept New England some forty years ago. Of the trees now standing

[1] An item in a town report for 1855 shows fifty dollars received for meat skewers and 150,000 on hand.

[2] A second committee consisting of Rufus Holden, Jonas Blodgett, and John Fletcher made necessary replacements in April of 1842.

[3] Now the residence of Clark W. McElvein.

on the common[1] three elms measured four feet from the ground have girths of 12 ft. 8 inches, 11 ft. 8 inches, and 12 ft. nine inches respectively; two ash trees similarly measured showed 10 ft. 1 inch, 11 ft. 6 inches; and two maples on Newtown Rd. checked at 9 ft. 7 inches and 8 ft. 11 inches.

The hurricane of 1938 punished these monarchs severely but they withstood and recovered amazingly to stand today as things of beauty and a joy to the citizens of Acton.

In 1840 Daniel Wetherbee erected an up to date flour and grain mill in East Acton on the site of the much older mill of Thomas Wheeler. Concerning the mill itself mention has already been made but something should be said about the builder. Few men have held a more prominent position in Middlesex County. He grew up in and eventually became proprietor of the old tavern situated on the Great Road from Fitchburg to Boston, Wetherbee's Tavern was known from Boston to Canada and was a temporary Mecca for drovers and drivers of baggage wagons for more than half a century preceding the advent of the railroads.

In later years the old tavern was the residence of Mr. Webster C. Robbins, who, although never a keeper of the hostelry as such, was one of Acton's busiest and most colorful citizens in his capacity as a farmer and general trader.

The sign of the Red Robin Inn that adorned the building after the Robbins regime originally hung in front of the imposing old Worden place in the days when it was a public house. It was embellished with the painting of an ancient sleigh and the date 1775 and was for generations a keepsake in the attic. The living room was the original bar room and the slots in which the bar set are plainly visible. Behind the chimney was a concealed cubby hole that served its laudable purpose in the days of the underground railroad.

The small stream running through his ancestral domains he at once improved and enlarged until Wetherbee's Mills comprised one of the most important points in the illustrated map of the county. Mr. Wetherbee was town clerk, assessor, and selectman for many years and was for five years representative to the legislature. He was largely responsible for establishing the State Reformatory at West Concord. He was one of the prime movers in the establishment of the Lowell and Framingham Railroad and a permanent director. He married Clarrisa Jones, daughter of Abel Jones. He died July 6, 1883 aged sixty eight, leaving a widow and seven children.

It was in 1840 also that Mr. Oliver W. Mead moved to West Acton from Boxborough. He and his brother Adelbert went into the

[1] As of July 1951 there were forty of the old trees standing between Nagog Hill Road and the residence of Mr. Horace Tuttle.

CENTER SCHOOLHOUSE 1871



SOUTH ACTON (CIRCA 1880)

marketing business and drove a horse team to Boston weekly with diverse produce. With the coming of the railroad, which they doubtless foresaw, their business thrived amazingly. In 1867 the two brothers together, with a third brother Varnum B. Mead, went into business in Boston under the name of A. & O. W. Mead & Co.

Their lumbering interests in New Hampshire and Maine were large as were also their holdings in lands and cattle in Iowa, Minnesota, and certain states which at that time were territories, particularly Wyoming. They built in West Acton the first refrigerator for fruit storage anywhere in this part of the country.

Mr. O. W. Mead was a director of the American Powder Mills for twenty years, settled important estates, was three years a director of the Florida Midland Railroad, was a director of the Board of Commerce, and was also on the directing boards of the First National Bank of Ayer and the North Middlesex Savings Bank. Adelbert Mead died in 1905 at the age of eighty three and Oliver March 20th, 1912 precisely on his eightieth birthday.

The A. & O. W. Mead Company is no longer extant but the family name is still associated with Boston business since Mr. Francis V. Mead of Belmont and West Acton, his son Varnum Mead of Lincoln, and Mr. Carl Richardson now operate the former dairy products company of H. A. Hovey at 35 North Market St.

In the spring of 1840 Acton once again attracted the attention of the country at large, even though the town itself was scarcely aware of it. Senator Daniel Webster, upon learning that the widow of Isaac Davis, Mrs. Hannah Leighton, was far advanced in years and without means of support, placed before the Senate of the United States a bill seeking to ensure her a pension for the remainder of her days. Mrs. Leighton was ninety three at the time and it would seem that no one could object to the pittance that would be needed until she should come to the end of her span. Nevertheless Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, together with senators Benton of Missouri, King of Alabama, Hubbard of New Hampshire and Allen of Ohio put up an extended argument on the grounds of impolicy, swelling the pension list, and opening the door to all descendants of soldiers of the Revolution. Mr. Webster, however, had not only his own surpassing eloquence to bring to the debate but also the outstanding forensic abilities of Mr. Calhoun's colleague from South Carolina, Senator Preston, and the brilliant Senator Crittenden of Kentucky. The bill passed by a vote of thirty one to nine and Hannah Leighton thereby received tardy but tangible evidence of the country's appreciation of her husband's sacrifice sixty five years before.[1]

[1] *Baltimore Sun*, May 12, 1840. President Van Buren was in favor of the passage of the bill.

Hannah Leighton lived only about a year after the awarding of the pension. There is conflict in the statements as to her age at death in the vital records of the town. One assertion gives it as ninety two and the gravestone in Woodlawn gives ninety six. If, as she stated, she was seventy one at the time of her first appeal for a pension in 1818 she was born in 1747 and hence was ninety four at the time of her death on December 22, 1841.

As the town grew one of the ever present terrors was that of fire. Real protection was non-existant. At the April meeting of 1842 the purchase of a fire engine was considered for the first time. No positive action was taken. It was once again the old story of procrastination which was to be repeated in 1847, 1849 and 1855 but within a score of years grim experience was to teach its folly.

In 1842, ten years after the schism that split the churches, an attempt was made to resuscitate the old First Parish by uniting all the elements which had not affiliated with the Evangelical Congregational Church.[1] The attempt had no permanent success, as a matter of fact it was about this time that a Methodist group maintained preaching for a short interval.

During 1843 two innovations were made, namely, the printing for the first time of the reports of the selectmen and the overseers of the poor and the erection at important highway intersections of stone guide posts. Possibly half a dozen of these are still standing but none are now legible due to neglect since the introduction of route numbers. One of the best examples extant is at the junction of Main Street and Nagog Hill Road. It is of split granite, the portion above ground being 32 inches wide, 54 inches high, and varying in thickness from three to four inches, being thinner at the top. Just where the earlier stones were quarried is not a matter of record but an entry dated 1888 cites Mr. Thomas McCarthy as supplying some at that time.

At the same time other events were imparting a direction to the town's future, namely, the building of the Fitchburg Railroad out to its temporary terminus at what is now West Acton.[2] Up to 1843 no village existed, the whole area being vaguely designated by the term "west part of town". The elements for starting a village were present since three highways met there to form the little triangle now bounded by Massachusetts Ave., Central Street, and Arlington Street.[3] Sometime previous to 1837 Bradley Stone built the brick house now used for the telephone exchange and in the year 1837 erected the store

[1] Fletcher, p. 293.

[2] The first recorded mention of West Acton depot occurs in the warrant for a town meeting in October of 1845.

[3] Arlington St. was Thomas Farr's road to meeting, built in 1735; Central St. was a county road built in 1766; Massachusetts Ave., originally the Harvard Turnpike, was built in 1799.

building on the opposite corner. This store was run by Burbeck and Tenney who were already well established before the railroad was more than a hope.[1] When it did come a horse-power saw was erected, for the purpose of sawing firewood for the engines. On this account the tiny settlement was known temporarily as Horse-power Village.

The locality now known as South Acton was, until the arrival of the railroad, known as Mill Corner. In the immediate vicinity of what is now Quimby square the outstanding buildings were the houses of Elnathan Jones[2] and Capt. Abel Jones[3] and the new store built in 1843 by two of Acton's most astute business men, Messrs. James and Varnum Tuttle, when the coming of the railroad was assured.[4]

As anyone familiar with Acton controversies might expect, the final location of the railroad was a matter of considerable manoeuvering. Between the machinations of those who were straining every nerve to route it through their back yard, so to speak, and those who deemed it a dirty and noisy nuisance, filling the air with clamor and soot, and causing valuable horses to flee in terror, the railway engineers must have had a hectic existence.

One preliminary survey envisioned a right of way coming through the Rocky Guzzle[5], thence following approximately the old road which now leads from the cemetery to the home of Mr. Dunn, thence westward between the houses of Mr. Rimbach and Mr. Liebfried to Littleton and Fitchburg. This route was violently opposed, however, by most of the substantial residents of the Centre because they felt that the beauty and charm of the village would be ruined. Needless to say this attitude had the blessing of the west and south parts of the town. Under the leadership of Winthrop E. Faulkner and Bradley Stone respectively the Centre was assissted in its desire to be by-passed and everybody was satisfied.

The Fitchburg Railroad was chartered in 1843. The first or northbound track was laid as far as Shirley Village in the fall of 1844. A contemporary diary contains the following two entries:

"June 17, 1844. We hear that the cars ran from Boston to Concord today for the first time since it was finished as far as there". December 30, 1844. The passenger cars ran up to Shirley Village today for the first time. A screaming of the engine whistle could be heard almost every hour from seven in the morning till seven at

[1] Mr. Charles H. Mead operated a general store in the building for many years.

[2] Locally designated as the Jones Tavern and dating back to Samuel Jones and the incorporation of the town.

[3] Stood across the street from the Jones Tavern.

[4] Located between the present post office and the railroad tracks.

[5] Between Woodlawn Cemetery and the Whitney Mortuary Chapel.

night. This was the first passenger train that went up there on the Fitchburg Railroad."[1]

The rails were laid to Fitchburg in 1845. The second track was laid in 1847.

The original ties were of split granite but were shortly found to be impractical since they were too rigid and cracked with the winter frost. Mr. David Kinsley has reason to believe that his old and almost buried back door step on the side of the house nearest the railroad is one of these relics.

For a few weeks in the summer of 1844 Horse-power Village enjoyed the distinction of being a railhead. Thereby hangs a tale. It was planned originally by the engineers to make the terminus some distance to the northwest at about the location of the former Boxborough station. Mr. Stone and his neighbors naturally exerted what influence they could to prevent this but their efforts might have been in vain had it not been that Mr. John Hoar,[2] who owned the land surrounding the proposed Boxborough site, cooperated heartily to prevent what he considered to be an unmitigated nuisance from being imposed upon him. He even went to the State House to protest and lay the enormity of his tribulations before any influential individuals who would listen. As a result the west part of Acton obtained a station which was not in the original scheme of things. Strangely enough, under the impact of changing conditions, the wheel of fortune has now turned full circle and the West Acton depot is being closed.

Mr. Ralph Richardson of Ayer was kind enough to impart the following interesting phase of the railroad story.

> *"Prior to the construction of the Fitchburg Railroad in* 1844 *the location of the village of Ayer was a sparsely settled, outlying farming section of Groton. There was a district school and about six farms of dubious prosperity together with two saw mills. The directors of the railroad requested the people of Groton to recommend a location for the Groton station. There was no village in Groton along the railroad line. At a Groton town meeting held August* 28, 1844 *it was voted that the selectmen be chosen a committee to confer with the directors of the railroad and instructed the committee to advocate the location of a depot at the lower part of the town near the mill of Calvin Fletcher.*
>
> *"The first Groton depot, freight depot and other buildings were erected there in* 1844 *at the crossing of the Groton and*

[1] Courtesy of Mr. Ralph Richardson of Ayer.
[2] Grandfather of Mr. John S. Hoar now living in West Acton.

Harvard road, then the most frequently travelled highway from Groton to Harvard, Lancaster, and Worcester but now a back road, rarely travelled, and neglected by the town highway department. That crossing of this highway has long been known as Flanagan's Crossing, from the name of the owner of a nearby dwelling.

"The Worcester and Nashua Railroad was incorporated March 5, 1944, *and construction was begun December* 1, 1846. *It crossed the Fitchburg Railroad 'in the wilderness'. The section between Ayer and Clinton was opened for travel July* 3, 1848; *between Clinton and Worcester November* 22, 1848; *between Ayer and Nashua December* 18, 1848.

"The Peterborough and Shirley Railroad was opened from Ayer to West Townsend in February of 1848 *and to Greenville, N. H. in* 1851.

"The Stony Brook Railroad was built from Ayer to North Chelmsford in 1848.

"The junction of these four railroads at a point where previously no village had existed led to the abandonment of the Groton depot at Flanagan's Crossing and the erection of a Union Station at the junction in 1848. *Around this junction there grew up a village, first known as South Groton and later as Groton Junction. A tannery, plow shop, foundry, machine shop, an enlarged saw mill and other industries were attracted. Groton Junction was a 'boom town' in the* 1850's *and* 1860's. *By* 1871 *the population had surpassed that of the old town of Groton. There was much dissatisfaction among the Junction residents over the failure of Groton to furnish school buildings, fire protection, street and sidewalks and other municiple services. It was difficult for Junction residents to travel to Groton to town meetings to vote their requests. Probably the staid, conservative voters at the center resented the eruption of this upstart boom town on the outer edge of its territory and begrudged voting appropriations for its sole benefit. The natural result was an agitation for the partition of the town and the incorporation of a separate township. As a result the town of Ayer was incorporated on February* 14, 1871, *thereby becoming one of the youngest towns in the county of Middlesex.*

America was on the move and this story of Ayer is but typical of many other localities. The junction of the four rail lines necessarily had an impact upon the fortunes of Acton. Anything that facilitated transportation was reflected in the business life of the communities along the railroads. The great rail barons had visions without limit

and the necessary money was available and easy to get. By 1851 the rails had been laid from Boston to the Canadian line and westward to St. Louis. In September of that year Boston held a huge three day celebration of the event at which President Fillmore and a score of state governors indulged in continued oratory and parades and harbor cruises. A two hundred and eighty eight page book was required to encompass the details of the exercises.[1]

It may be apropos at this point to insert the gist of a newspaper article of 1880 descriptive of South Acton as it was just prior to the building of the railroad.

> *"Very few living in this thriving village have an idea of the change that has taken place in two score years. In this locality forty years ago there was nothing here that could claim the dignity of a village. At that time the following were all of the buildings, the Faulkner homestead and grist mill, the dwelling of Elnathan Jones (which served the double purpose of hotel and store), the house of Mr. Abel Jones (upon the site of the present residence of Mr. Abram Jones, Mr. Abram Jones' saw mill, a copper shop which stood on the present location of the dry goods store (Exchange Hall), the home of Moses Hayward, on the short road running from Stow toward the Maynard road the dwellings of Abel Forbush and Cyrus Putnam, on the road to West Acton the residence of Abram Conant, and a school house on the present site of Dwight's block.*
>
> *The school house is fully exposed to the scorching rays of the sun and is devoid of shades, but it is the most convenient season for the children to be at school so here they are, varying in age from four or five to girls in their teens. We say girls for the reason that very few boys of this age attend school in the summer, as their work is valuable on the farm. At the far end of the room is the teacher's desk with some low seats about the platform for the little ABC children whose feet would not touch the floor from the ordinary ones. On each side of the open space between the teacher's desk and the door are arranged three long desks and four seats, the lads and misses sit on opposite sides of the room, facing each other, thus obviating the temptation which pupils in school sometimes experience to turn about in their seats.*

[1] *BOSTON RAILROAD JUBILEE*, p. 21, states that in 1851 there were 1200 miles of railway in Massachusetts; that $54,000,000 had been expended to complete the lines; that in 1850 the Massachusetts railways alone transported 9,000,000 passengers and 2,500,000 tons of freight. On an appended map the Marlboro Branch appears under the name of the Lancaster & Sterling R.R. The town of Ayer does not appear for reasons already made clear but the junction point now called Ayer is shown.

The recitations consist almost wholly of verbal answers to questions. This is because the art of writing is not taken up until the pupils are ten or twelve years of age and this is preceded by such a long training on the shaped designs for the muscles of the hand that the pupil gets to be in the teens before he presumes to a penmanship that will make him competent to write a letter.

In the schools of that day there was an excited interest in spelling which was kept alive by the spelling matches which were held frequently during the winter months and were participated in by the pupils of all the schools. They were not merely educational in influence but were much prized as social events and served to maintain a unity of feeling among the young throughout the town. The winter schools were always taught by a master. The public schools were supplemented by private ones in many cases. Almost every autumn there was an excellent private high school at the centre.

Miss Sally Bright also frequently had a private school in what is now known as the Bright place on the Stow road beyond the residence of Mr. Cyrus Hayward.

At this time the misses were taught, by the lady teacher, sewing, to make ornamental designs with beads, and to become skilled in other forms of ladies' handiwork with the needle. This was as much a part of the school work as the recitations of lessons from books.

In the store of James Tuttle one of the principle articles sold is spiritous liquors of various kinds according to the tastes of the patrons. Indeed, such a lively business is carried on that Mr. Tuttle hires a boy to wait on the customers, rinse out the glasses, etc.

The farmers thought spirits a necessity to enable them to endure the heat of the summer haying and to bear the cold of winter in getting in their wood and so every little hotel and grocery store licensed to sell liquors for the "public good" did a thriving business.

It may be wondered how farmers who were getting only twelve cents a pound for butter could afford to indulge in in toxicants to an extent to create such a thriving business. The answer is that liquors were cheap, New England rum, for instance, was thirty cents a gallon."

The reference made to the store of the Tuttle brothers requires some amplification since the company they organized had an enormous influence upon the community life for many years. When

a young man, just out of his teens, James Tuttle put in a couple of years at Mill Corner as a trader, followed by three years at the Centre. Being aware of the possibilities offered by the completion of the railroad he, when twenty five, went into partnership with his brother Varnum, then twenty one, under the name of J. & V. Tuttle.

Between the present post office and the station, which stood about on the location of the northern abutments of the bridge of today, they built their first store. It was a one story affair which was subsequently remodelled and made higher so that it housed several shops, one or more dwelling units, and at the turn of the century the dental offices and apartment of Dr. Ernest Hosmer.

In 1850 they moved to a new store on the site of the present grocery adjacent to the fire house. In 1852 they took into the business Mr. Elnathan Jones who had married their sister Eliza. In 1867 another partner, Mr. J. K. W. Wetherbee, having married another sister, was added and the partnership became the firm of Tuttle, Jones & Wetherbee. It was the closest knit and one of the most successful enterprises in the town's history grossing over a quarter of a million dollars in some of the later years. All of the men involved were renowned for sagacity and thrift and held numerous positions of trust in town affairs.[1]

In 1866 the store was severely damaged by fire but within a year was rebuilt. Previous to this, however, the firm had decided to spread out into the dry goods area and for that purpose had erected in 1870 the now obsolete but huge edifice known as Exchange Hall, that being the name of the public gathering place occupying the top floor. For about three decades this venture was an unqualified success but as the old guard vanished from the scene newer and less astute managers fared less well. In addition these later merchandisers were confronted with the grim fact that industrial Maynard had arisen as a competing shopping center and that the automobile made transportation thereto a matter of minutes.

For a time the heirs, through the medium of the company of Finney & Hoit, tried to continue in the old manner, but the death of Mr. Hoit in 1932 wrote finis to that chapter. More recently a mere token business has lingered on to an ultimate demise.

Much more light is thrown upon the particulars of this thriving enterprise by certain excerpts from the records kept by the daughter

[1] Mr. James Tuttle was selectman, assessor, overseer of the poor, chairman of the committee to build the present South Acton schoolhouse, and also on committees to erect other public buildings. Mr. Varnum Tuttle was one of the main backers of the chapel enterprise. Mr. Wetherbee was for fifteen years postmaster at Acton, selectman for seven years; town treasurer for thirty one years; and trustee and executor for many private estates.

of Mr. James Tuttle, Mrs. Anna Tuttle Newton.[1] They are given herewith as originally written.

"In a few years the firm had waxed strong and did a business of from 20,000 *to* 25,000 *a year, which gradually grew to a good quarter of a million dollars. From* 1843 *to* 1850 *the room and cellar sufficed, then the brothers moved to their new store which is on the site of the present grocery store.*

This building consisted of basement and a full story above and an attic floor, shed, carriage house and barn, a broad piazza around the principal floor and along the front the sign, "James Tuttle's Store".

This building was some 50 *by* 42 *and served its purpose until the evening of June* 20, 1866 *when it burned to the ground, but was promptly rebuilt in about a year at a cost of twelve thousand dollars.*

The central or dry goods store is in charge of Mr. Jones while the buying is done by himself and Mr. Wetherbee. Mr. Hiram Hapgood has charge of the office and attends to the collections and books.

Mr. James Tuttle and his son Waldo Tuttle now have charge of the grocery store. The extensive meat and produce business of the firm also centers here. Four butcher carts go out daily and these and the general delivery teams run every day to the Acton villages, Maynard, West Concord etc.

The buying for the grocery and produce store is all done by Mr. Varnum Tuttle who is in the Boston market daily making his purchases. The firm has four farms, two in Acton, and one each in Stow and Littleton, upon which are raised most of the vegetables sold on the routes. James Tuttle has charge of the farming on all but one of the farms. Milk production is quite a specialty. Considerable pasturage is owned in Antrim, N. H. where the young stock is kept.

The residences of two of the firm, the Messrs. Tuttle, are close to the stores while those of Messrs. Jones and Wetherbee are on the high ground on West Street.

Over a dozen horses are kept at work and the regular employees number about thirty while many are hired by the job.

The pay-roll includes H. J. Hapgood, head bookkeeper; James McGreen, custom cutter; John Brown, pressman;

[1] Submitted through the kindness of Mrs. Bertha Newton Lowden, granddaughter of Mr. James Tuttle.

Niel Currie, sole cutter; T. F. Newton, for over sixteen years salesman; Sanford Wheeler, now salesman and for over twenty two years running on the routes; Abram Tuttle, also upon the routes for a score of years; H. W. Tuttle, salesman for fifteen years; C. H. Sweatt, butcher for the past ten years; H. B. White, bookkeeper; O. L. Dart, route man and clerk; E. F. Conant, bookkeeper; Nellie M. Conant, the only saleslady; L. A. Jones, F. Z. Taylor, L. C. Hastings, E. J. Carter, F. L. Crosby, and F. H. Smith, clerks; Martin Tuttle, teaming; A. A. Wheeler, H. W. Howard, A. F. Sargent, W. T. Brown, Charles Hodges and D. L. Ball, clerks; Joseph Whitcomb, farmer at the Conant farm; Albert Moulton at the adjoining farm; William Sargent at the Stow farm; John McKenley at the Littleton farm; and for twenty five years Samuel Jones in charge of the stables.

The firm continued until the death of James Tuttle in 1898 when Waldo Tuttle and Theron Newton continued the grocery business as Tuttle & Newton. Soon after the death of Waldo Tuttle in 1916 Mr. Newton sold the store to the Acton Association.

Another enterprise that had its inception at the same time was the commission business of Joseph Warren Tuttle, located at 16 and 18 Clinton St. Boston for the handling of all kinds of country produce. Mr. Tuttle's residence stood on the south side of the street about half way between the present location of the railway water tank and the lumber yard. In 1848 Mr. George W. Tuttle was admitted to partnership; in 1874 Mr. Charles Jones; in 1875 Mr. Charles H. Tuttle and in 1883 Mr. Herbert A. Tuttle, and the company was known as J. W. Tuttle & Sons.[1]

In January of 1844 the question again arose concerning the disposition of the second meeting house which was now thirty eight years old and used irregularly as a place of worship. A committee was chosen to investigate the cost of remodelling it to serve as a combination town house and school building as compared with the expense of a new school building with an upper hall for town affairs or the expense of a new school alone. Another article in the same warrant proposed the building of a new school "near the pound". This would mean on or near the site of the old first meeting house long since gone. The article was dismissed but it was to appear again a generation later and result in the school house that stands on the spot today.

In passing it might be mentioned that the same year Mr. Daniel Tuttle was awarded the contract to ring the bell of the old meeting house for deaths and funerals at twenty cents per time and Cyrus

[1] Fletcher p. 295.

Dole was awarded the same amount to perform the same service at the new church.[1] Peter Tenney was to be grave digger and hearse driver at one dollar per burial.

In November of 1846 the question of a town hall once more arose. It was decided not to purchase the old meeting house but to appoint a committee to confer with the first parish with a view to renting the lower part of the building for a term of ten years provided it could be obtained at a figure not in excess of ninety dollars a year.[2] It was election day and one might conclude that it was unusually cold since the record states that adjournment was made to Tuttle's Tavern to count the votes for state officers. Doubtless the church was inadequately heated. Consequently on a bitter day the prospects of a warm tap room just across the common was decidedly attractive.[3]

Two outstanding events marked the religious activity for the year 1846. The Congregational Church started the present building which, in its original form, had the typical steeple in the center with two entrance doors and two long aisles leading to the rostrum at the extreme rear. The choir occupied a gallery between the entrance doors and behind the congregation.

The present architectural form was effectuated in 1898. The second event was the organization of the Baptist Church at West Acton on July 10th.[4]

In 1848 Ebenezer Davis built the pencil factory which functioned for years beside Nashoba Brook at the point where it passes under Brook St. The remains of the old dam are still visible but the building was destroyed by fire on October 17, 1944. Following Ebenezer Davis was Benjamin Davis who operated the plant as a sash and blind manufactory; then came William Schouler with a print works; and then A. G. Gray, Lewis Ball, and Henry Smith all in turn in the pencil business until 1888. Mr. Smith continued to live on the place for many years but directed his attention to the raising of various greenhouse crops for the Boston market.

Now and again reminders of what the old mill had produced appeared in the form of pencil stock two feet long that was given out by Miss Martha Smith as children's prizes at church picnics. These rewards were highly regarded both because of their length and

[1] The old meeting house refers to the one built in 1807 that stood on the present site of the town hall; the new meeting house, the first of two erected during Rev. Woodbury's pastorate, stood on the site of the present church.

[2] Rufus Holden, Luther Conant, Cyrus Wheeler, Alden Fuller, Abner Hosmer.

[3] The tavern of Daniel Tuttle stood between the present fire house in the Centre and the stone marker bearing the name of James Kinsley. It was subsequently burned and replaced by the Monument House, which in turn burned in 1913.

[4] See Appendix XIV.

because they were made in the days when straight grained cedar heart was obtainable. They were a joy to sharpen. Upon occasion the winners of these trophies would bring them to school and work amain to produce legible script while the top of the mighty stylus waged about over the head of each privileged individual who was, needless to say, the object of considerable envy.

After the death of Mr. Smith the property was bought by Mr. Edmund Pennell who subsequently sold to Dr. Willis Middleton under whose ownership the building became an aviary for rare and foreign birds. It is now the residence of the Woodbine family.

At one time the aforementioned Ebenezer Davis manufactured bellows in a shop located on the William Davis place, later called the Bellows Stock Farm and later owned by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Griffin. The present occupant of the property is Mr. John Murphy. Eventually the shop was moved to the Eben Davis place where Dr. Wendell F. Davis now lives and where his father continued to make bellows.

With the passage of the years it became desirable in the minds of some that the facilities of the old burying ground be augmented by starting a new cemetery somewhere between the west and south villages. To that end Benjamin Hapgood, Bradley Stone, and Phineas Harrington were chosen at a town meeting held in November of 1847 to seek out available and satisfactory ground and report the following March. They reported that two acres could be obtained from John Hapgood and possibly additional acreage from Daniel Wetherbee if necessary. The final action came in April when the selectmen were authorized to purchase as much land as they saw fit from Daniel Wetherbee. Thus was started what now is called Mt. Hope Cemetery. In December of 1848 the selectmen were given the power to fence it if they deemed it necessary.[1]

It was in 1848 also that West Acton obtained its first post office, located in the office of Dr. Reuben Green who had just opened it up for practice.[2] It remained in that building until 1854 when it was transferred to the local store, there to stay until the Cleveland administration. Thereupon Hanson Littlefield became postmaster and the office was moved to his store. In 1889 Charles B. Stone was reappointed and the office was removed to a room specially built for it. At that time the Windsor Hotel occupied the site of the present post office. According to Mr. John Hoar this building was used as a boarding house for the men who helped to build the railroad. In

[1] The record does not make clear whether any land was obtained from John Hapgood. The question is not sufficiently important to induce a search of the county records.

[2] Dr. Isaiah Hutchins bought out Dr. Green in 1852 but the post office remained fixed for two years more.

his youth it was the residence of Adelbert Mead and his brother Oliver. There is reason to believe that originally it was a tavern run by Shepley & Davis. The present Windsor Avenue was so named because the hotel stood on its corner.

When the Republican party broke up in the early 1830's its pieces went into both the Whig and Democratic parties. The so-called "new" Republican wing, which John Quincy Adams represented, stood for internal improvements and an active national government, and these men tended to become Whigs. The "old" Republican wing, of which Jefferson was the founder, was primarily interested in freedom, maintenance of states' rights, and the restriction of the executive power. These men were hard put to it to know where to turn since the Whigs stood for a narrow construction of executive power while the Democrats stood for states' rights — but not to the extent of disrupting the Union.

As the years rolled on the storm clouds presaging the oncoming civil war gathered ominously. The South's system of argiculture was a colossal drain on the soil and could survive only by the accretion of territory as, for instance, that taken in the Mexican War. Consequently in the campaign of 1848 Lewis Cass, an ardent expansionist from Michigan received the South's favor and the Democratic nomination. The Whigs chose General Taylor, the hero of Buena Vista. A third party, the Free Soilers, was formed in the north by the coalition of three hitherto separate and hostile elements — the abolitionist Liberty Party, the anti-slavery Whigs of New England, and the "Barnburner" faction of the New York Democracy, which came in to be revenged on Cass for "stealing" the Democratic nomination from Van Buren. This latter party nominated Van Buren and Charles Francis Adams for its ticket and although it failed to carry a single state it did roll up three hundred thousand votes, mostly in New York, thereby throwing its great electoral weight to the Whigs and landing Taylor in the Presidency.

This three way split filtered down through into state politics and in consequence we find Acton in the gubernatorial election casting 135 votes for Stephen Phillips, Free Soiler, 50 votes for Caleb Cushing, Democrat, and 42 votes for the Whig candidate, George Briggs.[1] The town's abolition majority did not, however, reflect the sentiment in the state at large since Briggs was elected with 61640 votes while Phillips and Cushing trailed with 36011 and 25323 votes respectively.

In November of 1849 there appears an article in the warrant

[1] The following year (1849) Acton cast 100 votes for Phillips, Free Soiler; 92 votes for Boutwell, Democrat, and 58 votes for Briggs, Whig.

asking whether or not the town will provide lights and fuel for lectures. There is no hint in the record as to the nature of these gatherings but doubtless some of them had to do with the attempted resuscitation of the old First Parish or possibly the Methodist group that operated for a time. In any event it was voted to supply lights and heat for town affairs only.

HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF ACTON

PART V

1850 - 1900

In January of 1850 Acton voted to accept an invitation from the town of Concord to assist in the seventy fifth anniversary of Concord Fight on the following April 19th. It was further voted to be responsible for one hundred tickets to the great dinner to be served and to pay for the tickets of Acton soldiers who desired to participate.

A large general committee on arrangements, fifty eight in all, was chosen from the surrounding towns. Acton's contingent was composed of the following personnel; Rufus Holden, James T. Woodbury, Francis Tuttle, Jona. B. Davis, Bradley Stone, Silas Hosmer, Winthrop E. Faulkner, Abraham Conant, Joseph W. Tuttle, Reuben Barker, Charles Robbins, Samuel T. Adams, Aaron Chaffin, Nathan Brooks, Daniel Wetherbee, John White, Ebenezer Hayward, David M. Handley.

The festivities of the day consisted of a morning parade to the North Bridge which was escorted by the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company and included the governor and his suite, the Boston Brass Band, and all the possible representatives from other towns and cities that could be assembled. Following the huge dinner, to which three thousand sat down, there were speeches by Robert Rantoul, Edward Everett, Rufus Choate, Governor George Briggs and John G. Palfrey.

Mr. Rantoul was the chief orator of the day and he certainly gave his listeners their money's worth. In a Gargantuan opus seventy four pages in length he made a recapitulation of the world's history from the creation to the instant of his speech. As a display of knowledge of the progress of man and of the classics it was a success but the untutored listener must have wondered what it was about.

The president of the day, Mr. E. R. Hoar, in calling upon the Acton representative, Mr. Stevens Hayward, referred to the words of Isaac Davis as he departed from his home to the effect that he had a right to go to Concord on the king's highway and that he would go if he had to meet all the British troops in Boston. Rev. Mr. Woodbury offered the prayer and the band concluded the exercises with the White Cockade.

Two survivors of the engagement at the bridge were present, namely, Jonathan Harrington and Amos Baker, aged ninety two and ninety four respectively. The latter was too feeble to make any remarks publicly but Harrington stated that after the British fire had

been returned the man on his right, Noah Parkhurst of Lincoln said, "Now the war has begun and no one knows when it will end".

However amiable the towns of Concord and Acton may have been in April of 1850 there was by mid-summer, strange as it may seem, decided coolness. This was brought about by the fact that in July Hon. Josiah Adams of Framingham, a native of Acton and an ardent champion of its rights and reputation, addressed an open letter to Mr. Lemuel Shattuck of Concord relative to statements included by him in his history of the town published in 1835.

Adams lists a formidable bill of particulars as to numerous errors, inconsistencies, and evasions, and accuses Shattuck of trying to make it appear that Davis marched his company to the right of the line on the morning of April 19, 1775, not because he was requested to do so but because of his ignorance of military procedure or as a result of colossal brashness.

The whole tenor of Adams's letter is indicated by the following two quotations:

> *"It was necessary for your purpose, to account in some way, for the well established fact that Captain Davis was killed leading his company in the front; though he was the junior officer of both Capt. Brown and Capt. Miles, the commanders of the two Concord Minute Companies. And to make it more clear that Davis assumed the most honorable, without knowing that it was also the most dangerous place.*
>
> *"You have permitted your libels on the character and memory of Isaac Davis to remain unretracted for fifteen years; and if, at first, they might have passed as gross mistakes, they must now be set down as studied fabrications."*

Regardless of what Shattuck's objective may have been, Adams is on solid ground as to the facts since he brings to bear the sworn statements of Solomon Smith and Thomas Thorp of Davis's company as well as one by Amos Baker of the Lincoln company. Baker, the last survivor of Concord Fight, deposed on April 22, 1850, that after a conference in which Davis took part he returned to his company and marched it to the right of the line in order to be in front as the column approached the bridge. Baker went on to say that at the time he assumed that the reason behind the move was the fact that aside from Davis's company there was scarcely a bayonet on the field and that is was a good move in case the British made a bayonet charge.

It is not known by whom, or when, or where the idea of building the monument on the common was first discussed in private. The first recorded public action took place on November 11, 1850 when



ACTON HIGH SCHOOL - CLASS OF 1886



HON. WM. A. WILDE

the town, in meeting assembled, voted to remove the remains of Davis, Hosmer, and Hayward, their friends and relatives so willing, to a suitable place on Acton Common, and erect over them a monument; and that the selectmen together with the three ministers of the town, be a committee to lay out what they thought proper and petition Congress and the state legislature for aid in the project.

In consequence the committee organized itself on December 17, 1850 with selectman Ivory Keyes as chairman and Rev. Robert Stinson as secretary and drew up the following petition:

> *"We, the undersigned, beg leave to represent that Capt. Isaac Davis of Acton, Mass., was under arms at Concord Fight, the 19th of April, A. D.* 1775, *and was shot dead at the first fire at the Old North Bridge in Concord, at the head of his company of Acton Minute Men, leading on the column of attack; that it is contemplated to erect over said Isaac Davis's remains a suitable Monument, and this is to pray you grant aid in erecting said monument."*

Signed.	Ivory Keyes	James T. Woodbury
	Luther Conant	Robert Stinson
	James Tuttle	Horace Richardson

The petition was presented to the legislature early in the session of 1851 and was referred to the joint committee on militia consisting of Saunders and Hawley of the Senate and Wilson of Lenox, Nettleton of Chicopee, Brastow of Somerville, Foster of Groveland, and Hatch of Mansfield, of the House. This committee gave Mr. Woodbury an attentive and gracious hearing as subsequently presented to the legislature a most favorable recommendation in which it was pointed out that Capt. Davis, as leader of the first organized resistance to the troops of King George belonged not only to Acton but to the commonwealth and the nation as well.[1] The crux of the resolution is contained in the following paragraph:

> *"Resolved: That the sum of two thousand dollars be, and hereby is, appropriated for a monument to Capt. Isaac Davis, to be erected in the town of Acton, under the direction of his Excellency the Governor, in connection with a committee of said town, and the Governor is hereby authorized to draw his warrant accordingly: Provided the citizens of the said town of Acton raise the sum of five hundred dollars for the same purpose."*

The resolve came up suddenly for a third reading on February 3, 1851.[2] Mr. Wilson of Lenox opened the debate with a history

[1] *Historical Papers*, vol. 2.
[2] *Boston Semi-Weekly Atlas*, Feb. 8, 1851.

of the gallant Davis and concluded with an earnest appeal for the passage of the motion.

Mr. Curtis of West Brookfield was decidedly opposed to military monuments in general and made the point that ere long the reprehensible Mexican War would be producing its patriots whose friends would be seeking similar monumental honors.

Mr. Nettleton of Chicopee expressed amazement at such an attitude and suggested that should the motion fail that another be introduced whereby all monuments, even that of Washington himself, be struck from their pedestals.

By a political manoeuver Mr. Woodbury had been caught unawares but his adversaries were ill advised if they thought he was so readily whipped. This was just the sort of tight spot that challenged his mettle and called forth all his forensic talents. He rose in his place and began as follows:

> *I had not expected that the question would be taken on these resolves at this day or at this hour. I am not prepared as I would have been to go into this, to me and the people I represent, exceedingly interesting matter. But the discussion of the merits of this bill has come on; objections, — very unexpected objections, — have been urged to its passage to a third reading; and I have just concluded that I may as well state my whole case to this House, now as ever. As I have the honor to present this petition, and was chosen by the town of Acton on the committee for the procuring of aid from the Commonwealth, it will be expected of me that I should make some extended remarks; otherwise I might have sat in dumb silence during the passage of these resolves, leaving to other abler men the stirring theme. But even in that case I doubt, — averse as I honestly am to talking in any assembly, — whether I should have had sufficient 'restraining grace' after what has been said in opposition to this bill."*

With withering scorn he made the observation that the "Breed of Tories had not yet died out" and then for an hour and a half, speaking entirely extemporaneously, he held the chamber spell bound. Holding aloft the shoe buckles of Davis and the powder horn of Hayward, which he had had in readiness against the day when he made his formal speech, he made what was undoubtedly the most sensational oration of his career.[1] At its close a goodly number of eyes were damp.

[1] The speech, subsequently written out for the press, fills forty two pages. See *Historical Papers*, vol. 2 in Acton Library.

Mr. Kingman of Bridgewater then spoke in opposition to the measure and chided Mr. Woodbury for his anti-peace sentiments. He was interrupted by a motion to adjourn which by parliamentary rules coud not be debated and had to be immediately put to a vote. It failed decisively.

Mr. Banning of Monterey and Messrs. Schoulder and Munroe of Boston all supported the bill. They were interrupted by another motion to adjourn, a device evidently of the opposition to prevent action. The motion failed again, however, by a vote of 124 to 76. Immediately Mr. Kimball of Boston moved the previous question and the bill passed by a vote of one hundred ninety to thirty three.[1]

One month later to a day the town voted to raise not only the specified five hundred dollars but an additional two hundred should it prove necessary. Evidently the decision was not universally pleasing since the records show that at a meeting held a monh later there was an attempt made to abandon the whole project. The answer to this move was to reiterate the previous vote and in addition to proceed with a great celebration in which surrounding towns would be invited to participate.

Once these details were settled events moved on apace. The building committee believed in and practiced economy and expedition. Governor Boutwell was nominal chairman but the actual operations went forward under the indomitable drive of Mr. Woodbury. A variety of models were submitted by professional designers, not only for the monument but for the enclosing fence as well.[2] In the meantime a sub committee had reported the cooperation and consent of the friends and relatives with respect to the moving of the remains.

Another sub committee authorized to proceed with proposals to build, advertised in the Quincy Democrat for three weeks, giving the information that inquiries were to be made at the state house where the models could be examined, and that bids would be accepted until May 19th.. On May 26th contracts were signed with G. K. Eastman of Lowell and A. L. Hutchinson of Manchester, N. H.

On July 2nd the building committee of six already mentioned was augmented by thirty others to have overall supervision of the projected ceremonies.[3] In August the committee was instructed by the town to guarantee to the caterers a minumum of one thousand plates at the huge dinner contemplated for the dedication exercises.

[1] The thirty three who opposed the measure are listed in *Historical Papers*, vol. 2.

[2] Monument design by a Mr. Parker of Boston; fence design by Smith & Lovett of Boston.

[3] Winthrop E. Faulkner, Jonathan B. Davis, Nathan Brooks, Daniel Wetherbee, Andrew Hapgood, Simon Tuttle, Winthrop Conant, Asa Parker, Frederick Rouillard, John Fletcher, Silas Hosmer, Simon Hosmer, William Wilde, Robert Chaffin, Alden Fuller, Abraham Jones, David Handley, John Buttrick, Moses Taylor, Bradley Stone, Ebenezer Davis, Harris Cowdry, John Miles, Reuben Green, Rufus Holden, William Lothrop, Levi Stevens, Elbridge Robbins, Stevens Hayward, Horace Tuttle.

The corner stone was laid on August 21st. A large choir directed by Col. Faulkner sang three Watts psalms, namely Majesty, Northfield, and Truro. Prayer was offered by Rev. Stinson and hymns written by Rev. Richardson were sung.[1] Under the corner stone were placed, in a copper box, the following papers:

1. A letter of Josiah Adams to Lemuel Shattuck (author of a history of Concord written in 1835) vindicating the claims of Capt. Isaac Davis to his share of the honors of Concord Fight: also the depositions of the witnesses to the facts.

2. An adddress by Josiah Adams delivered July 21, 1835 upon the occasion of the first centennial of the town's incorporation.

3. An oration by Robert Rantoul, Jr. and an account of the union celebration at Concord, April 19, 1850.

4. An address by his Excellency George S. Boutwell to the two branches of the Massachusetts legislature on January 16, 1851.

5. The annual report of the attorney general of Massachusetts for February, 1851.

6. Valuation of the real estate, and the names of the owners, in Acton as of November 2, 1850.

7. Report of the joint standing committee of the militia, to which committee had been submitted the petition of Ivory Keyes and others for aid in building the monument.

8. A statement in brief of the history of the Davis Monument together with several committees, cost, and certain statistical data concerning the town of Acton.

Previous to the laying of the corner stone the committee on arrangements had met on July 5th, and each Monday evening thereafter, had chosen Rev. Woodbury as chairman and had decided to invite Gov. Boutwell of Groton to deliver the oration and Rev. J. Pierpont of Medford to give the poem. Sub committees were selected to attend to invitations, contract for the dinner, the tent, to disinter the remains and prepare them for burial, to prepare the music, and to attend to the decorations.

Concord, Sudbury, Stow, Boxborough, Littleton, Westford and Carlisle were invited through their selectmen to participate in the celebration. All but Sudbury responded favorably. James Kimball of Littleton and John Fletcher of Boxborough were added to the committee on the dinner; John Keyes of Concord was added to the committee on invitations as were also Rev. Bannister of Carlisle, E. Whitney of Stow, and Deacon Cutter of Westford.

On October 6th the committee voted that Col. Winthrop E. Faulkner be marshal of the day, that Rev. Mr. Frost of Concord act as chaplain, and that adjacent towns be asked to send an assistant marshal and

[1] *Boston Semi-Weekly Advertiser* of August 23, 1851.

three vice-presidents.

On October 20th Rev. Woodbury, since he was president of the day, resigned as chairman of the committee whereupon Mr. Luther Conant was chosen in his stead.

The vice presidents from Acton were Luther Davis, Jonathan B. Davis, Capt. Jonathan Hosmer, and Stevens Hayward (all nephews of men killed at Concord) plus Robert Chaffin and Abraham Conant.

The representatives from the adjacent towns listed in the Boston Weekly Journal of October 30, 1851 were as follows: Concord; Stedman Buttrick, F. R. Gourgas, John Stacy, J. S. Keyes; Littleton Benjamin Hale, Benjamin Barrett, Joel Boynton, John Jacobs; Westford; James Prescott, Isaac Day, Jr., Solomon Richardson, D. C. Butterfield. There were no representatives from Stow or Sudbury for reasons that do not appear in any of the records of the three towns concerned.

Before giving the details of the dedication exercises it might be well to consider the salient points with respect to the monument itself. The base is fifteen feet square, surmounted by an arch, which in turn supports an obelisk four feet four inches square at the top. The capstone is seventy five feet from the foundation which sets eight feet into the earth. The blocks are of Acton granite split from the ledges lying in the pasture of Mr. Putnam and several hundred feet to the rear of the Pederson truck barn on Newtown Road.[1] These blocks are so cut that footholds exist on the inside of the obelisk making it possible for any reasonably agile adult to climb to the top. Every few courses a granite cross beam ties the whole rigidly. These are cleverly cut and placed so that the flag pole may be lowered for painting and incidental repairs. The bottom of the pole is squared to fit into a recess chiseled out of the last cross beam a few feet below the capstone. The pole is twenty five feet tall. Twice it has been shattered by lightning, once about Civil War time and again in the early nineteen hundreds. In the autumn of 1876 an American eagle created a minor sensation by perching on the top of the pole for a quarter of an hour.[2]

On the northwest face of the monument, directly under the arch, is cut the following inscription:

> *"The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the town of Acton, co-operating to perpetuate the fame of their glorious deeds of patriotism, have erected this monument in honor of Capt. Isaac Davis and privates Abner Hosmer and James Hayward, citizen soldiers of Acton and Provincial Minute-*

[1] At the time of the building of the monument Rev. Woodbury lived in the house now occupied by Mr. Putnam.

[2] *Acton Patriot*, October 12, 1876, front page, column 5.

Men, who fell in Concord Fight, the 19th day of April, A. D. 1775.

"On the morning of that eventful day the Provincial officers held a council of war near the old North Bridge in Concord; and as they separated, Davis exclaimed, 'I haven't a man that is afraid to go!' and immediately marched his company from the left to the right of the line, and led in the first organized attack upon the troops of George III in that memorable war, which by the help of God, made the thirteen colonies independent of Great Britain and gave political being to the United States of America.

"Acton, April 19, 1851."

The slate gravestones, which stood for seventy five years to mark the resting place of the three patriots in the old burying ground (not at this time named Woodlawn) had been laid on the sides of the mound surrounding the base of the monument. They were of ancient design and bear the following interesting inscriptions.

"MENENTI MORO

Here lies the body of Mr. Abner Hosmer, who was killed at Concord April 19th 1775 in ye defense of ye just rights of his country, being in the twenty first year of his age."

Hayward's stone has on it this poem.[1]

"This monument may unborn ages tell
How brave young Hayward like a hero fell,
When fighting for his countries liberty
Was slain, and here his body now doth lye —
He and his foe were by each other slain,
His victim's blood with his ye earth did stain.
Upon ye field he was with victory crowned,
And yet must yield his breath upon the ground.
He expressed his hope in God before his death,
After his foe had yielded up his breath.
Oh, may his death a laysting witness lye
Against oppressor's bloody cruelty."

The nature of the first fence surrounding the monument is not known. Fletcher shows a photograph of a pen and ink sketch but whether it is a picture of the designer's draft or of the actual finished structure is not made clear. An article in the town warrant of June 1876 speaks of removing the inside fence. At the turn of the century there was but one, formed of heavy, sagging chains supported

[1] At the time of his death Hayward was twenty five, his birthday being April 4.

by square granite posts, which enclosed the whole banking including the gravestones mentioned above. At that time, what is now called Woodbury Lane, continued on across the main street and made a junction with the road past the church in front of the present fire house.

The dedication exercises took place on October 29, 1851. The day was lowering but comfortable and the rain held off until well after the conclusion of the exercises. The stars and stripes floated over the monument; four lines of flags extended from the ground to the corners of the capstone; the streets were ablaze with bunting and the village houses as well. In addition some five thousand persons were present to witness the spectacle.

The procession formed on the green at noon. In the forefront was the military escort of honor for the dead consisting of the First Artillery, the Concord Artillery accompanied by Flagg's Boston Brass Band, the Prescott Guards of Pepperell, and the Sudbury Rifles. Then came the civic procession under the command of chief marshal Col. Winthrop E. Faulkner of Acton. The next section was made up of the Governor and his staff, the President of the Massachusetts Senate, the invited guests, and the joint committees of arangements for the various towns. Following these came the #1 division of the Order of United Americans and the Okommakamesit Fire Company #2 of Marlboro. The final two divisions were composed of citizens of Acton and the seven adjacent towns. Several of the delegations caried appropriate banners, the most conspicuous being that of Lexington. It was large and white with red fringe, carrying the date April 19, 1775, and the famous words, "Oh what a glorious day for America", uttered by Samuel Adams as he left Lexington that morning. On the reverse side were the names of Capt. Parker and the other patriots who fell in the cause of liberty on Lexington green.

From the common the procession moved toward the old burying ground where the remains of Davis, Hosmer, and Hayward awaited removal to the monument. The bones, which had been disinterred some days previously, were nearly entire, and were enclosed in an oblong, black walnut box, highly polished and studded with silver nails. The remains were enclosed in separate compartments, each marked upon the cover by a silver plate bearing the proper name. The cheek bone of Hosmer showed the trace of the ball which caused his death, entering just below the left eye and emerging at the back of the neck. The box was placed in a hearse and under the escort of the Acton militia company, the Davis Guards, with First Lt. Daniel Jones in command, met the procession at what is now the junction of Concord Road with Nagog Hill Road. Here both

parties halted — the military escort in open order with arms presented awaited the approach of the sacred remains — the Lowell Band, which accompanied them playing a dirge by Kurick. Flagg's Band, accompanying the escort then played the dirge, "Peace troubled Soul", after which the escort fell into position and the procession, including the remains, proceeded to the monument.

Eight venerable citizens of the town served as pall bearers. They were Joseph Harris and Dr. Charles Tuttle, each eighty two: Matthew Hosmer, nephew of Abner, eighty; John Harris, Daniel Barker and James Keyes, each seventy six; Jonathan Barker, seventy four; and Lemuel Hildreth, seventy.

Upon arrival at the monument the box was opened and placed in the middle of the street upon a stand covered with a black velvet pall, in order that those who so desired might look upon the remains. Then the box was closed and set into a niche prepared for it in the eternal stone of the monument.[1]

At one o'clock the exercises began in the huge tent sheltering the tables for the dinner. An invocation was offered by Rev. Mr. Frost of Concord and an original hymn, written by Rev. Henry Durant and set to the tune "Hamburg", was sung.

Thereupon Mr. Woodbury, president of the day, introduced as the orator of the occasion Governor George S. Boutwell of Groton. Mr. Boutwell's speech was fullsome.[2] Two paragraphs are typical of the style.

> *"Patriotism is one of the most exalted virtues. It is not, as some would have us believe, a mere excitement, or even a passion. It is high among the virtues which men, in this state of existence, may exhibit. . . . It is a large and noble view of the entire nation, a regard for its institutions, social, moral, civil and religious, crowned by a manly spirit which leads its possessor to peril in all their defence. The patriot is devoted and self sacrificing. Such were Davis, Hosmer and Hayward. Their names were comparatively humble yet they were men of duty, men of religion, men of Liberal patriotism."*
>
> *"The sentiment of the Revolution was altogether moral. There was an entire absence of the spirit of revenge, rapine or blood. They never for a moment placed as much reliance upon their numbers as upon the justice of their cause and the existence of a Supreme ruler, who controls the affairs of men. Such was the tone of the press, the pulpit and the*

[1] The Acton ledges from which the monument stones were quarried belong to a crystalline series which according to a competent present day geologist are at least two hundred million years old.

[2] *Historical Papers*, vol. 2 . Twenty three pages.

bar. Everywhere the morality of the contest was examined and the ground carefully tested at each step; not by leading men only, but by all those who had a vote to give in a town meeting, or an arm to sustain the weapons of war. They were no zealots like the crusaders, but plain careful men of sound moral perception and correct judgement. It is true that they were the descendants of those who rejoiced when Charles the First was beheaded and James the Second was dethroned. This feeling however had no mixture of cruelty in it but proceeded from a conviction that the monarchs were unworthy of the throne. Their impulses were always in favor of liberty. They sympathized with the republican party in England, encouraged them at home, and welcomed them to these shores."

After the governor took his seat Rev. Mr. Pierpont of Medford read a long poem into which were ingeniously interwoven the events of April 19, 1775. Nevertheless genius, however potent, could not compete with hunger. The press reports make the observation that before the conclusion of the poem the listeners, who had sat for nearly two hours before chilled viands, were guilty of a disturbing clatter of utensils.[1]

There then followed thirteen toasts (having some connection presumably with the thirteen original colonies) to which responses were made at some length as the populace got what solace it could out of the cold repast. Mr. Robert Winthrop had this to say:

"We are here today not to inaugurate the opening of some magnificent highway; not to display the rich trophies of agricultural or horticultural industry and skill; not to celebrate the triumphs of modern mechanic art and invention; not to offer homage to some chief magistrate. These are not the ohjects that have summoned to this retired spot such masses of the people of Middlesex and of Massachusetts. We have assembled on the contrary to pay grateful, though tardy, tribute to the memory of three humble citizens of one of the smallest towns in the state, two of them privates in a militia company, and the third with no higher rank than that of a captain, whose simple story is that they laid down their lives seventy six years ago in defense of American liberty.",

and Mr. Thompson of Charlestown this:

"Coming as I do from the far famed monumental city where stands Bunker Hill, it is with peculiar pleasure that I unite this day with the citizens of Acton in the dedication

[1] *Boston Weekly Journal*, October 30, 1851.

of the Davis Monument now erected here. I have observed this fair and appropriate structure so justly due to the honored dead and I welcome Acton as hereafter to be distinguished among the monumental places of Middlesex. I know this sequestered and quiet spot was not a battlefield of the Revolution but I know also that brave men were born and reared here, who, with the morning sun went forth to battle for freedom, and with its evening shade were brought back to be buried among its first martyrs."

There were numerous letters from interested and prominent figures in the state and nation. One was from Daniel Webster who had befriended Acton eleven years previous when he lifted his gifted voice in the United States Senate to secure a pension for the aged widow of Isaac Davis. Mr. Webster closed his letter with the now famous observation, "Isaac Davis, — an early grave in the cause of liberty has secured to him the long and grateful remembrance of his country".

Due to the fact that President Fillmore had attended the great Railway Jubilee in Boston just the month previous he did not accept the invitation of Rev. Woodbury. He did, however, send the following note of regret:

Mr. J. T. Woodbury, Esq., Acton, Mass.

Dear Sir,

I have yours of the 7th instant inviting me, on behalf of the Committee of Arrangements, to be present at the dedication of the granite monument on Acton Common, on the 29th instant.

I am glad to see deserved honors paid to those who fell fighting for liberty in the Revolution, but regret that my official duties will not allow me the gratification of showing, by my presence, on the interesting occasion for which you are preparing, my appreciation for the services of the departed heroes whose memory your monument is intended to perpetuate.

Truly yours,
Millard Fillmore

Such is the story of the granite memorial on Acton Common that stands there to honor the men "Who were not afraid to go". It should remind every citizen that passes it by of his obligation to meet the challenges of the present day with a spirit comparable to theirs.

At the time of the dedication of the monument several of the venerable persons who could recall the days of the Revolution spoke of the confused state of affairs on the morning of Concord Fight. For weeks the word had gone around that when the time came Gage's

troops would wipe out completely the families of all rebels and obstructionists. Hence many women and children on that morning hid the most valuable possessions and fled to the woods where they remained crying and praying until past noon when the wonderful news came from Concord.

Dr. Charles Tuttle, aged nine at the time, related that he remembered his house being filled with women. He lived on the town farm[1] and the place had been chosen as a refuge because it was well off the mainly travelled roads. Some even came from Westford and remained until the news of the British retreat. He and his brother Simon, two years older, were delegated by their mother to guide these women through the woods toward Westford, and once or twice the whole company took fright and ran for their lives, thinking they saw the British regulars.

It was also recalled by some of the nonogenarians that Capt. Joseph Robbins[2] had certain stores of powder and ball and other items belonging to the province. These he carried back into the woods and hid. He was a great strong man and well proportioned although he weighed over three hundred pounds.

Mrs. Joseph Harris, aged eighty one at the time of the dedication, remembered the morning well. She recalled that a neighbor, Mr. Francis Chaffin, with his gun on his shoulder, awakened them. Her father, Joseph Reed, was one of Davis's minute men and served as an excellent soldier throughout most of the war. As he started to leave his wife said, "Husband will you not stop for breakfast,". He replied, "No, no, I can't stop for that", and taking a piece of bread and some cheese he rushed from the door, but immediately turned back to embrace his family with the remark, "My wife and my children, may God be with you, for I cannot be".[3]

While the town was concentrating a large portion of its energies on the monument project other items of interest were transpiring as well. In January of 1850 for instance, for the first time in its history, the town passed the thousand dollar mark on the school appropriation. It voted eleven hundred. In May the town valuation was printed for the first time and distributed among the voters. In September a deposition by Bradley Stone relative to the part taken by Isaac Davis at Concord Fight was ordered spread upon the town records.[4] Early in 1851 a vote was passed to "build a tomb to deposit dead bodies in the winter" and later rescinded. In April Rev. Woodbury was instructed to oppose the contemplated division

[1] Now the residence of Mr. Robert Young.

[2] The site of his house now identified by field stone marker is just east of Woodlawn Cemetery.

[3] Joseph Reed lived on a homestead in back of Will's Hole and the quarries in North Acton.

[4] Appendix XII.

of Middlesex county. Also in the same year the town authorized the printing of eight hundred copies of the speech of Rev. Woodbury before the Massachusetts legislature and the proceedings of the Davis Monument celebration.

It was in 1851 also that Acton made its first move with respect to the then unforeseen but approaching Civil War a decade in the future. The fugitive slave law had passed in September of 1850 in spite of the wildest opposition of the Free Soilers and the abolitionists. The strategy of the South on this issue was to be proved bad in the light of subsequent events. They should have realized that the one hope for slavery was to let the North forget about it instead of perpetually rubbing it in by hunting runaways through Northern streets and countryside. Even Emerson, the serene philosopher who had advised the abolitionists to love neighbors more and black brethren less, wrote in his journal, 'This filthy enactment was made in the nineteenth century by people who could read and write. I will not obey it, by God!'[1]

Four months after the passage of the slave law, on the 20th of January 1851, Acton decided to speak its mind on the subject and chose Abraham Conant, John Fletcher, Dr. Charles Tuttle, Silas Hosmer, Joseph W. Tuttle, Peter Johnson and Hinckley Bowers as a committee to prepare a set of resolves for presentation at a future meeting. These resolutions, after some considerable debate concerning the deleting of the term "cut throats" and other pithy idioms were finally passed and ordered to be printed in as many papers as the committee thought best in order that the attitude of the town might be publicly known.

> *'WHEREAS, the United States Congress at its session in* 1850, *at the bidding of the slave holders, and apparently for the promotion of slavery, enacted a law for the recovery of fugitive slaves which deprives the accused of those means of defense which the constitution allows to the most abandoned villian in the land and is so manifestly iniquitous and unconstitutional as to create doubts in the minds of lovers of freedom as to their duty in sustaining such law.*
>
> *And, whereas, public opinion is the expounder of all laws enacted by an elective government. Therefore we, the citizens of Acton feel it our duty to express in this public manner our views of this, as we believe, unjust and despotic law.*
>
> *Therefore resolved that we, sons of the Puritans and descendants of that patriotic band who with Capt. Isaac Davis and other kindred spirits on the* 19*th of April* 1775 *made the first organized resistance to the armed power of*

[1] *The Growth of the American Republic,* Morison & Commager, v. 1, p. 606.

the mother country while attempting to enforce oppressive laws in that war which led to the independence of the United States Feel it to be a duty we owe to the memory of our Fathers that we owe to ourselves, to our descendants and to our Country and to our God, to record our solemn protest against said laws.

Resolved that although we justify our fathers in their resistance to the oppressive acts of the Government of England, we could not be understood as advocating forcible resistance to our Government or any of its despotic laws, believing there is still power with the people at the ballot box to cause their rights to be respected and to affect the repeal of all unjust and oppressive laws and when selecting men for our rulers if we had more regard for principles than for party and when depositing our ballots if we would be guided more by the dictates of reason and the welfare of our race than by designing politicians and a corrupt party press we should have less reason to complain of unjust laws and less fear of losing our liberties.

Resolved that the act for the recovery of Fugitive Slaves with its summary process, its irresponsible tribunals, its violation of habeas Corpus and jury trials, its disregard of ordinary rules of evidence, and its temptations to bribery is an abomination without a parallel in the annals of our government.

Resolved that the apparent compromise and agreement between the advocates of chattel slavery and the monied interests in sustaining the Fugitive act and kindred measures should be a stimulus to all lovers of Freedom and the rights of man in uniting to sustain all measures which tend to advance the cause of human liberty and maintain our inalienable rights.

Resolved that a compliance with the act for the recovery of Fugitive Slaves would be in opposition to all our cherished ideas of the Declaration of Independence, our Bill of Rights, and our moral duties as accountable beings and that we would sooner suffer the pains and penalties that might be inflicted upon us for refusing it our aid than be guilty of hindering a Fugitive from oppression in regaining and sustaining that liberty which we believe to be of more value than gold.

Resolved that as friends of liberty and well wishers for the peace and prosperity of our country we believe that a rigorous enforcement of this law instead of cementing our

bond of Union and stopping all agitation on the subject of slavery will and should awaken the friends of human rights to increased activity and that our duty as lovers of our country and our race should impel us to use all the means in our power for the repeal of this as we believe unwise and wicked law.

It will be recalled that at the time of the dedication of the monument the Davis Guards figured in the exercises. This local militia company had its inception at the seventy-fifth anniversary at Concord in 1850. At that time a large company from Acton was organized to represent the minute men of the Revolution. They were officered by Colonel Winthrop E. Faulkner as captain, and Daniel Jones[1] and James Harris as lieutenants. The distinctive features of their uniforms were a flannel blouse and a canteen with 1775 stenciled on it. Their guns were heterogeneous in style and some looked old enough to have been at the original Concord Fight. According to Fletcher the contents of the canteens, judging from its potentcy, must have been of later date.

The marching of this company was so highly praised that the result was a reawakening of military interest. As a result, on April 19, 1851, Company E, Sixth Massachusetts Regiment, known as the Davis Guards, was organized and thrived for many years. The promptness with which the Acton company responded to Lincoln's call for volunteers in 1861 was primarily due to the existence of the Davis Guards.[2]

Colonel Winthrop E. Faulkner was the first captain. Its other commanding officers until the outbreak of the Civil War were Captains Daniel Jones, Rufus Holden, Moses Taylor, Daniel Tuttle, Aaron Handley, and again Daniel Tuttle who was commanding in 1861.

Apparently the second meeting house was used by the military as a makeshift armory for several years since the records show that Tristram Edwards received five dollars and fifty cents for opening "the hall for the soldiers" twenty two times during 1854.

The South Acton post office was established on December 17, 1851 with Ezra C. Rodimon as first postmaster.

By 1852 the national scene had become increasingly confused politically, over and above the situation in 1848. In consequence personal allegiances were continually shifting due to the changing attitudes of the several candidates. As a consequence Acton, in November of that year, cast 117 votes for Franklin Pierce, the Democratic candidate, 91 votes for John P. Hale, the Free Soil

[1] Son of Capt. Silas Jones, who commanded the Davis Blues in Boston in 1812.
[2] When organized in 1851 the company mustered 229 officers and men.

candidate, and 48 votes for the Whig nominee, Gen. Winfield Scott.

Mention has been made previously of the amount of drinking prevalent during this era. An item bearing on that point occurs with respect to the town warrant for May 4th of 1853. It was the custom for all the liquor in the town to be sold through a town agent. The question at issue was whether or not this agent should make an itemized report of the amount of spirits sold each year and to whom sold. The article was dismissed. Apparently the electorate was in a dismissing mood. An article seeking the establishment of a high school suffered the same fate. This is the first mention of a proposed high school in the town records. The actual realization was some thirty years in the future.

By this time it was becoming obvious that the railroad, with all its advantages, was not an unalloyed blessing. Fatalities were all too numerous. On October 30th, 1847 two Acton men were killed at Athol by the collapse of a new bridge,[1] another had lost his life on the Charlestown Branch,[2] and two more had been hit and killed at Hapgood's crossing. Upon two occasions the selectmen had been instructed to meet with the officials of the Fitchburg Railroad to discuss means for diminishing the hazard. On September 22, 1853 it was voted to have gates installed.

In 1852 Mr. Luke Blanchard, then aged twenty four, moved into Acton from Boxborough. His arrival, through his own personality and those of his son and grandson, which will be treated in the proper chronological context, effected the business history of the town for a century. He developed into an astute and successful trader whose interests extended far beyond the local scene. He was the grandson of Calvin Blanchard who was at Concord Fight and Bunker Hill, and a grand-nephew of Luther Blanchard, fifer in Davis's company.

It was because of his relationship to these Revolutionary heroes that he erected to their memory in 1895 the memorial stone that stands on Prospect St. and marks the farm from which they, and Abner Hosmer, started for Concord.[3]

During these years the pot was boiling all the while relative to the matter of temperance and the sale of strong liquor. Each year there would be an article in the warrant seeking to restrict

[1] Benjamin King, age 30; also a man named Huntoon, age 27.
[2] Edmund Hosmer, age 36, May 5, 1843.
[3] The two Blanchard boys lived on the old family homestead which at that time was in Stow (Boxborough was incorporated in 1783). They were sojourning at the Hosmer home while learning the stone mason's trade. Calvin in particular was a huge man and performed prodigies of strength in the erection of the breastworks on Bunker Hill.

the dispensation of spirits and each year it would be dismissed. Finally in April of 1854 the temperance contingent won their first real victory when it was voted to revoke the existing licenses of the liquor agents and to appoint as many store keepers as would pay five dollars for the privilege of selling with the proviso that they sell for "medicinal, chemical, and mechanical purposes only."

At the same meeting Acton expressed its opinion on national affairs by taking under consideration the proposed repeal of the Missouri Compromise of 1820 whereby slavery was to be prohibited above 36° 30' north latitude. The point was that the South, having readily agreed to the idea in 1820, was finding that it was working to its disadvantage in the matter of available territory. In 1820 it had seemed a good idea to the South to permit Maine to offset Louisiana, and later to balance Arkansas against Michigan, but before long, with Iowa and Wisconsin seeking admittance and Kansas and Nebraska rapidly being settled, the South found itself without bargaining power and hence desired repeal.

On this issue the voters of Acton passed the following resolves:

"Resolved that the legal voters in the state of Massachusetts in town meeting assembled most earnestly protest against the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, not merely because it violates a solemn compact but because it shakes the confidence of the great masses of the people in our republican form of legislation and is an attempt to extend and perpetuate slavery in territory now free.

"Resolved that the congress of the United States is sincerely and earnestly requested to pass no bill for the territorial government of Nebraska without the proviso of the Missouri Compromise excluding slavery from the said territory.

"Resolved that the town clerk send a copy of these resolutions to each senator and representative of Massachusetts in the United States congress.

This action, taken together with the town's previous stand respecting the Fugitive Slave Law, put Acton in the anti-slavery party without possibility of misunderstanding.

Ever since the formation of the Davis Guards in 1851 the question of finding a town hall and an armory, or a combination of both, had come before one town meeting after another without success until 1857. In April of that year it was voted to hire the lower part of the second meeting house as an armory, the town to receive half the armory rental and the trustees of the

first parish the other half. It was further decided to extend the rental period to ten years provided it could be obtained for not more than sixty dollars per year and if in addition the town could have full control of the same.

Not only was the matter of the armory a pressing one but the time had come as well for the town to have offices for the selectmen. Consequently the voters went on to instruct the selectmen to either hire the meeting house as voted above or make other provision for transacting the town business.

Presumably the plan mentioned above was carried into effect with sufficient success so that in May of 1859 a decision was reached to purchase the building for a town house. This became a fact and the papers were passed sometime during the summer. In October it was voted to take out insurance for an amount between twelve and fifteen hundred dollars. A month later it was decided to repair the roof and the belfry, sell the pews and the pulpit and apply the proceeds toward fixing the upper part as a town hall. Thus ended all connection of the meeting house of 1807 with religious affairs.

With the influx of Europeans under the pressure of famine abroad and labor shortage at home it became necessary to take some action relative to the qualifications for voting. In 1857 a proposition was before the people of Massachusetts seeking to amend the state constitution in order to make a literacy test for voting mandatory. On this issue Acton voted in favor of the amendment 64 to 43. Two years later another amendment read as follows:

> *"Shall a foreigner be compelled to reside in the U. S. two years after receiving his naturalization papers before he may vote or hold office?*

Although this carried in Acton by 39 to 28 it did not prevail throughout the state in general. As might be expected those sections where a foreign vote was already appreciable went heavily in the negative. Even in Acton where foreigners at the time were scarce the closeness of the vote indicated that many felt that to tack on two more years after the five normally required was a bit too stringent.

In 1858 a shoe shop was built in West Acton by Oliver C. Wyman and operated by him until his death in 1885. He was succeeded by William Mott, father of Otis Mott, who now lives in the village at the age of ninety eight. In this same year Mr. Charles Robinson built a hall for the use of the Universalist Society which was its place of meeting for ten years. After the Civil War it became known as Grand Army Hall and served

as a general meeting place; housing the Lyceum and the Catholic Mission until the erection of the present Catholic church.

We will here record several diverse but interesting items that belong to the year 1860. They indicate that although the political atmosphere was getting tense the details of town business went on about as usual.

In March it was voted that the school committee hereafter consist of seven members, one from each district. Furthermore the school report for the year emphasizes the need for a high school. Despite this early agitation of the matter realization was to be delayed a quarter of a century.

Another vote that will appeal to the humor of the present day reader has to do with dogs. It appears that certain persons were greatly disturbed because of the existence of the dog license. Realizing that it was hopeless to get a vote of repeal an attempt was made to have the town refund pro-rata all moneys remaining in the hands of the town treasurer after damage done by dogs had been paid. Believe it or not the vote passed.

In addition the old meetng house, which had recently been transformed into a town hall, was provided with seats, lights, and stair railings.

In the latter part of the year the selectmen and the town clerk were commissioned to purchase a safe for the preservation of the town records.

By the autumn of 1860 the four year old Republican party, which had been in 1856 an organization of crusaders under the leadership of the explorer John C. Fremont, had learned rapidly and was under the control of seasoned and alert politicians. Consequently Abraham Lincoln received the presidential nomination on the third ballot; not because of his surpassing merits, which no one yet suspected, but as a matter of political strategy. His humble birth, homely wit, and skill in debate would attract the same sort of northerners who had once voted for Jackson; and no one else could carry the doubtful states of Indiana and Illinois that had gone to Buchanan four years before.

The Democratic convention in Charleston split on the slavery question. Stephen A. Douglas was the logical candidate and had he been nominated he would undoubtedly have been elected. The cotton states delegates demanded a plank in the platform specifically stating that "slavery was right". Failing to get anything so clear cut, and obviously politically dangerous, they stalked out of the convention. This left Douglas with insufficient votes to obtain the nomination. Therefore the convention adjourned to

Baltimore where, with new delegates, he became the official choice of the Democratic party.

The seceders held a separate convention which nominated John C. Breckenridge of Kentucky, on a platform of slavery extension and, with that in view, the annexation of Cuba.

A fourth party, newly formed on the spur of the moment, and designating itself as the National Constitutional Union, nominated Senator Bell of Tennessee. Lincoln asserted this group to be made up of the "nice exclusive sort" of Whigs who hoped to persuade the electorate to forget everything of the past and unite in brotherly love. Strangely enough this nebulous idealism appealed to sufficiently many persons to capture one eighth of the electoral vote.

As might be presumed the facts just related set the stage for one of the most vicious and hectic campaigns in the history of the nation. It was common knowledge that war hung on the result, certainly if not immediately then eventually. The Southerners had made it amply clear that they would not remain in the Union if a purely Northern party elected its candidate.[1]

Needless to say the impact of events upon every town and state was tremendous. In Acton, Abraham Lincoln (Republican) polled 186 votes; Stephen Douglas (Democrat) had 113; Bell, the Constitutional Union candidate secured 23; and John C. Breckenridge, the other Democratic nominee had 3, one of which was undoubtedly cast by Capt. Daniel Tuttle, a most positive character, who was to bring repute to Acton within a few short months.

In the Massachusetts gubernatorial election John C. Andrew (Republican) polled 104,527; Erasmus D. Beach (Douglas Democrat) had 35,191; Amos Lawrence (National Constitutional Union) had 23,816; and Benjamin F. Butler (Breckenridge Democrat) obtained 6000.

It is a point of interest that Butler, who was a famous anti-slavery general and declared that the slaves were contraband and could be freed by military orders, and was probably the most detested Union commander throughout the South with the

[1] Morison & Commager, *The Growth of the American Republic* gives the following information for the election of 1860.

Candidates	*Popular vote*	*Electoral vote*
Lincoln	1,866,432	180
Douglas	1,375,197	12
Breckenridge	845,763	72
Bell	589,586	39

These figures include no popular vote for South Carolina, where Breckenridge electors were chosen by the legislature. In the other states that eventually seceded the popular vote was Breckenridge 736,592, Bell 345,919, Douglas 72,084.

possible exception of Sherman, should have been the candidate of the wing of the Democratic Party that was all for expanding slavery into the rest of the territories.

Governor Andrew was inaugurated on January 5th 1861 and in his speech on that day he made it plain that he believed that war between the North and the South was imminent. He advised an immediate inquiry as to whether, in addition to the active volunteer militia, the dormant militia, or some considerable portion of it, should not be placed on an active footing. In addition he communicated on that same day, by special and trusted messengers, with the governors of the other New England states, urging them to likewise take inventory of the available man power. Their replies were favorable and thus on the first day of his governorship Mr. Andrew placed himself in confidential relations with his neighboring executives, an act that was to prove exceedingly beneficial to all concerned in the future.

On January 16th, eleven days after his inauguration, he directed the Adjutant-General to issue General Order No. 4 as follows:

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Head-Quarters, Boston, Jan. 16, 1861.

General Order No. 4

Events which have recently occurred, and are now in progress, require that Massachusetts should be at all times ready to furnish her quota upon any requisition of the President of the United States, to aid in the maintenance of the laws and the peace of the Union. His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief therefore orders, —

That the commanding officer of each company of volunteer militia examine with care the roll of his company, and cause the name of each member, together with his rank and place of residence, to be properly recorded, and a copy of the same to be forwarded to the Adjutant-General. Previous to which, commanders of companies shall make strict inquiry, whether there are men in their commands, who from age, physical defects, business, or family causes, may be unable or indisposed to respond at once to the orders of the Commander-in-chief, made in response to the call of the President of the United States, that they be forthwith discharged; so that their places may be filled by men ready for any public exigency which may arise, whenever called upon.

After the above orders shall have been fulfilled, no

discharge, either of officer or private, shall be granted unless for cause satisfactory to the Commander-in-chief.

If any companies have not the number of men allowed by law, the commanders of the same shall make proper exertions to have the vacancies filled, and the men properly drilled and uniformed, and their names and places of residence forwarded to headquarters.

To promote the objects embraced in this order, the general, field and staff officers, and the Adjutant and acting Quartermaster General will give all aid and assistance in their power.

Major Generals Sutton, Morse and Andrews will cause this order to be promulgated throughout their respective divisions.

By command of His Excellency John A. Andrew, Governor and Commander-in-chief.

William Schouler, Adjutant-General

From the day that the order was issued a new spirit and zeal imbued the volunteer force. Applications came from all parts of the state for permission to raise new companies. The general posture of opinion was parallel to that contained in a resolution passed at this time in the legislature to the effect, "that it is the universal sentiment of the people of Massachusetts, that the President should enforce the excution of the laws of the United States, defend the Union, and protect the national property;" and that to this end the state "cheerfully tenders her entire means, civil and military, to enable him to do so."

The annual town meeting of 1861 fell on April first and one can gather from the business transacted no inkling of the great events just in the offing. The assembled citizens voted to make such improvements as seemed necessary at the cemetery; to appropriate one hundred dollars for board for visiting teachers that should attend the institute to be held under the direction of the state board of education, and to light and heat the town house free of charge; and to spend a sum not to exceed seventy five dollars to repair the so called Assabet Road from Faulkner's Mills to Stow line. For the enlightenment of the modern reader it should be here stated that at this time the town of Maynard was non-existent but the busy little village that was to become Maynard was known as Assabet. It was further voted to prohibit cattle, horses, sheep or swine from feeding upon the highway or any common lands and that the field drivers be instructed to enforce the ordinance. This was the last vain effort of the contingent which for years had tried to get free pasturage.

While Acton men were considering these mundane matters on April Fools Day of 1861 President Lincoln was rejecting one of the maddest schemes of the nation's history. Certainly no more appropriate day could have been picked by cabinet member Seward to propose that in order to unite the North and South the United States pick quarrels with France, Spain, England and Russia and, after appointing Seward as prime minister, sail into a conflict of conquest and glory.[1]

How could Acton men know that as they debated about cemeteries, and pigs, and school teachers, power mad men in high places were conniving for a four year civil war in which Acton youth would bleed and die and starve in rebel prisons.

Eleven days later bedlam broke loose. Fort Sumter was fired upon and forced to surrender on April 12th. On the 15th Lincoln issued his call for seventy five thousand volunteers. The news came to Acton by telegram in the late evening and the town's amazing response was due to two things. In the first place the Davis Guards were already functioning as a trained militia unit, and secondly Captain Daniel Tuttle, while not a man of war, was a man of energy and a loyal citizen. He was forty seven years old and exempt from military service. He was in addition a Breckenridge Democrat which meant that he believed that so long as the South did not violate the law of the land she had a right to her slaves and should be let alone. Lastly he had a huge and prosperous farm[2] and a large family of children most of them young.

The author well remembers the captain in his declining years. Even then his voice was powerful enough to be heard a hundred yards in normal conversation and his idioms were homely and pointed. One can well imagine that during the campaign of 1860 his opinions were unpopular and occasioned many a hot argument around the pot-bellied stove in the village store.

But firing on the flag at Sumter was decidedly something else than village debate. It was barefaced treason and when the orders came for him to assemble his company and report in Lowell there was but one thing to be done. Despite the fact that his command was dispersed through several towns the bells were rung and messengers sent in all directions. Equipments were forwarded, wagons procured, overcoats provided (it was a chill and raw April night) and at half past seven the next morning Capt. Tuttle with one hundred per cent of his company of fifty two men[3], some of whom had to be reached in Stow, Littleton, and Boxborough, reported to Colonel Edward F.

[1] Morison & Commager, *The Growth of the American Republic*, vol. 1, p. 647.

[2] So long as he controlled the farm all the extensive meadow land between Newtown Rd. and Nagog Hill Rd. was cleanly mowed by hand each year to provide hay for the large dairy.

[3] For muster roll see Appendix XIX.

Jones of the 6th Massachusetts Regiment that Co. E of Acton was on hand, fully equipped, and ready for duty.[1] Although the men could not be aware of it that bleak morning a strange combination of circumstances was to make them the first company of the first regiment of the Union Army to arrive in Washington in response to Lincoln's call for volunteers.

The field and staff officers of the Sixth were Edward F. Jones, of Pepperell, colonel; Benjamin F. Watson of Lawrence, lieutenant-colonel; Josiah A. Sawtell, of Lowell, major; Alpha B. Farr, of Lowell, adjutant; James Monroe, of Cambridge, quartermaster; Charles Babbige, of Pepperell, chaplain; Norman Smith, of Groton, surgeon; Jansen T. Paine, of Charlestown, surgeon's mate; Rufus L. Plaisted, of Lowell, paymaster; Samuel D. Shattuck, of Groton, sergeant-major; Church Howe, of Worcester, quartermaster-sergeant; John Dupee, of Boston, commissary-sergeant; Frederick Stafford, of Lowell, drum major; William Gray, of Acton, hospital steward. The Sixth had a full staff and regimental band.

The regiment was composed of Company A, "National Greys", of Lowell; Company B, "Groton Artillery", of Groton; Company C, "Mechanics' Phalanx", of Lowell; Company D, "City Guards", of Lowell; Company E, "Davis Guards", of Acton, Daniel Tuttle, Captain; William Chapman, George W. Rand, Silas Blodgett, Aaron S. Fletcher, lieutenants; Company F, "Warren Light Guard" of Lawrence; Company G, "Worcester Light Infantry," of Worcester; Company H, "Watson Light Guard," of Lowell; Company I, "Light Infantry," of Lawrence; Company K, "Washington Light Guard", of Boston; Company L, "Light Infantry", of Stoneham.

At one o'clock on the same day the regiment arrived in Boston where it was accorded a tremendous ovation by the cheering crowds as it marched to Boylston Hall where its headquarters were established. At eleven o'clock on the forenoon of the 17th it marched from Boylston Hall to the State House where it received new rifled muskets in exchange for smooth bores. The Governor made a short speech and presented the regiment with a new set of colors.

The train ride from Boston to New York was one long orgy of wild acclaim. At several places the bells were rung and artillery fired. The regiment reached New York at sunrise on the 18th. The march down Broadway to the Jersey City Ferry is described as one of the grandest and most effective scenes ever witnessed. The wildest enthusiasm inspired all classes. Strong men wept unashamed and implored the blessings of Heaven upon the regiment and the State which had placed it at the extreme forefront of the Union forces. A gentleman who was an eye witness wrote, "I was always proud of

[1] Fletcher, p. 283.

my native state; but never until now did I fully realize how grand she is."[1]

There seemed to be something of the supernatural in the fact that this grand old regiment, made up of the men of Acton and Middlesex, should have reached Baltimore on the morning of April 19th. The city was bitter against the Union and against the men who came to defend it. The streets were filled with angry mobs as the blue clad soldiers arrived. As the railroad facilities of Baltimore were then arranged it was necessary that the eleven cars be horse drawn across the city from one station to the other. This gave the angry crowd a priceless opportunity. Missles of all sorts were hurled through the windows. Acting under orders the soldiers bore the insults patiently until all but two cars had run the gantlet. These two, becoming separated from the rest due to damage done to the tracks, had to be evacuated and the soldiers, in solid column, marched toward their destination amid a shower of rocks and diverse debris. They increased their step to the double-quick, which seemed to further infuriate the mob to the point where pistol shots were fired into the ranks and one soldier fell dead. It was obvious that patience had ceased to be a virtue. The order to fire was given and in consequence several of the mob fell, either dead or wounded.

Amid such scenes the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment reached the station and passed out of the city having had four killed[2] and thirty six wounded none of whom were local men since the Acton company had been in the cars first to cross the city. Thus eighty six years to the day the descendants of those Acton men who were under fire at Concord Bridge found themselves in the vanguard of the Union Army in the streets of Baltimore.

Of the four who were killed, Charles Taylor was buried in Baltimore. No trace of his family or friends ever came to light. Needham was buried in Lawrence; Whitney and Ladd in Lowell. The funeral services over the bodies of these first matyrs of the Rebellion were imposing. In each city granite monuments today commemorate their supreme sacrifice.

It has been a mystery to many how it came about that a regiment from Massachusetts happened to reach Washington in advance of those of nearer states. In an address delivered before the Grand Army[3] Mr. Luther Conant clarified this point and went on to give an excellent summary of the part played by the men of Acton throughout the war. The portions of that speech that are not repititious of what has been said above will be given herewith.

[1] Schouler, *History of Massachusetts in the Civil War*, p. 72.
[2] Addison O. Whitney, Luther C. Ladd, Charles A. Taylor of Company D. of Lowell and Sumner H. Needham of Company I of Lawrence.
[3] Fletcher, p. 284.

In obedience to General Order No. 4, issued by Governor Andrew, January 16, 1861, requiring the militia of the state to be forthwith put into a state of efficiency, the Davis Guards drilled every week during the winter and recruited its ranks to be ready to answer any call. On the 19th of January, at a meeting of the field officers and company commanders, at the American House in Lowell, it was unanimously voted to tender the services of the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment to the Governor and the Legislature when such services shall become desirable for purposes contemplated in General Order No. 4.

On the 23rd of January the Legislature proffered to the President of the United States such aid in men and money as he may require to maintain the authority of the National Government. This resolution was forwarded to the President on the same day.

The result of this act of volunteering was that the Sixth Regiment was the first regiment called and General Butler was the first to receive a commission as a general officer of volunteers.

The circumstances of the transmission of the order are given in detail. The proclamation of President Lincoln calling for seventy five thousand men, and convoking an extra session of Congress was dated April 15th, but did not reach Boston until the 16th and was not received in Albany until the 17th, receiving from the Governor of New York on the 19th the response by telegram to the President that the Seventh New York would start for Washington that evening.

In the meantime Governor Andrew had received on the 15th a telegram from Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts announcing the call for troops.

The Governor at once issued his Special Order No. 14, commanding the colonels of the Third, Fourth, Sixth and Eighth Regiments forthwith to muster their commands in uniform on Boston Common, and sent it by special messengers. Colonel Jones, who was in Boston, received his orders first and issued orders immediately by telegraph to the Lowell and Lawrence companies and then took the four o'clock train on the Fitchburg Railroad to carry the order to the companies in Acton and Groton to assemble in Huntington Hall in Lowell on the morning of the 16th at seven o'clock — uniformed and ready to proceed to Washington.

Colonel Jones, on his trip to Groton, met Captain Aaron

C. Handley in the railroad station at South Acton, who immediately started with the order to Captain Tuttle.

Late in the afternoon of the 15*th Captain Daniel Tuttle was chosen in town meeting to an important office. On being requested by the moderator to be sworn as usual he declined for the reason that he was liable to be sent out of the state with his company any day.*

At two o'clock in the morning of the 16*th the bells of the town house and church were rung, calling the people of Acton to witness the departure of that military company which was the first in this or any other state to leave home in response to the President's call.*

After leaving Baltimore at about two o'clock of the 19*th the regiment reached Washington late in the afternoon and was received by General McPowell of General Scott's staff, and was assigned quarters in the Senate chamber at the Capitol, where it remained about twelve days.*

The regiment, aided by a part of the Eighth Regiment and a battery, the whole under the command of General Butler, then went back and reopened the route through Baltimore, staying there some ten days, and were detailed to guard the junction of the main track of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad at the Washington branch, at the Relay House, where it remained until the expiration of its service.

The regiment was mustered in at Washington on April 22*nd, discharged August* 2*nd, being absent from home about* 115 *days. The term of service, though brief, is assured a high place in history. This regiment was the first to leave home and the first to be attacked. It received a vote of thanks from the first session of the Thirty seventh Congress for the alacrity with which it responded to the call of the President, and for the bravery and patriotism displayed on the* 19*th of April on the march through Baltimore.*

In his order dismissing the regiment Governor Andrew said: "Its gallant conduct has reflected new lustre on the Commonwealth, and has given new historic interest to the 19*th of April. It will be received by our people with warm hearts and generous hands." Of the fifty two men who went out under Captain Tuttle, twenty seven are now living.*

The remainder of Mr. Conant's speech, having to do with the part played by Acton men during the rest of the war is given in full in Appendix XV. It will be sufficient here to say that of the two hundred and sixteen men credited to Acton, eighteen died while in service, either killed in battle or victims of disease. This does not include

natives or residents of the town who enlisted elsewhere, who died in service. The complete list of Acton dead is given in Appendix XVI. In Appendix XVII will be found those Acton men who survived. In addition to the foregoing there were some sixty odd others who due to the bounty in the latter part of the war or for reasons not disclosed enlisted to Acton's credit. The data concerning them will be found in Appendix XVIII. It will be noted that several of these were from New Orleans. Doubtless they were prisoners of war who re-enlisted on the spot because of the bounty, and never set foot in Acton.

On April 27, 1861, just twelve days after the departure of Company E and the Sixth Regiment for Washington, Acton held a town meeting the like of which never had been seen. It was specially called and unusual things were afoot — so much so in fact that the ladies of the town who so desired were assembled in the lower hall. Before article two of the town warrant came up for consideration a committee of three, namely, Simon Hosmer, John Fletcher, Jr., and Nathaniel Hapgood was appointed by the moderator Mr. Luther Conant, to invite the awaiting ladies to the upper hall and escort them thereto.

> *Thereupon article two was read as follows: To see if the town will appropriate a sum of money as a contingent fund for the assistance of the needy families of the Acton Davis Guards now in the service of the United States or pass any vote or votes thereon.*

The immediate reaction to the article was the preparation of a set of resolves and the passage of several votes all of which are embraced in the copy of records given below.

> *"WHEREAS, a part of the Southern States have rebelled against the Union, formed a confederacy and taken up arms with the treasonable design of subverting the authority of the Federal Government, therefore resolved, That the citizens of Acton, one and all, whatever may have been their former political opinions, will unite and rally around the Constitution and the Flag of our Union and be ready to imitate the noble example of our fathers who shed their blood in defense of our religious and civil liberties.*
>
> 2. *Resolved, that it is the duty of every citizen to come forward in the present crisis of our affairs and do all in his power to assist in maintaining the rightful authority of the national government and preserving unimpaired our constitutional liberties.*
>
> 3. *Resolved, that the soldiers of the Acton Davis Guards, starting like their namesakes in* 1775 *at a minute's warning with the* 6*th regiment, being the very first to respond to the President's call, armed and equipped for the defense of*

the National Capital, have honored themselves and the town, shown by their gallant conduct that they are true lineal descendants of Davis, Hosmer and Hayward, men who were not afraid to go and who fought and fell in defense of our liberties.

4. *Resolved, that the town of Acton appropriate five thousand dollars for the benefit of the families of soldiers in the town of Acton who were or may be hereafter engaged in the service of the United States to protect our government, the said appropriation to be entrusted to a committee chosen by the town to be by them distributed among said families as they may deem expedient.*

After singing "My Country 'tis of Thee" and giving cheers for the Union and for Capt. Tuttle and his company "now in Washington" the resolutions were adopted.

It was then voted to choose a committee of five persons to take charge of the money thus appropriated by the town and to take care of the families of the soldiers "who have enlisted or may hereafter enlist from the town in the service of the United States." Also voted that said committee purchase pistols for the use of the Davis Guards to be kept by them so long as they retain their organization as a company, to be kept in their armory when not in actual service with their other state arms and to be sent to the company as soon as they can be procured. Also voted that said committee procure ammunition and make such provision for the said soldiers as they may deem expedient. Also voted that W. E. Faulkner, Oliver W. Mead, Daniel Wetherbee, David Handley and Moses Taylor be the committee."

By the middle of July the town began making preparations for the reception of the Davis Guards on their return home at the expiration of their three months enlistment. At a town meeting held July 16 it was voted that a committee consisting of the selectmen and two representatives from each school district be empowered to make all necessary arrangements. The personnel of the committee was Zoheth Taylor, Alden Fuller, Jonas Putney, selectmen, together with James Keyes, Daniel Fletcher, David Handley, Daniel Wetherbee, Oliver W. Mead, John M. Miles, James Billings, Benjamin Priest, Luther Conant, Luther Piper, Cyrus Fletcher and William Schouler.[1]

The committee was instructed to procure either the Lowell Brass Band or Hall's Band of Boston and arrange to entertain at a dinner the wives of the men of company E together with the companies then formed in town. In addition a cold collation was to be prepared

[1] The William Schouler on the committee is not to be confused with William Schouler who was Adjutant-General of Massachusetts during the Civil War. The Acton Schouler ran a print works in the old pencil factory for several years.

for the general citizenry and a supply of powder was to be provided for as many field pieces as might be thought proper for use on the day of the reception. Acton has always enjoyed hearing guns go off. The committee was to draw on the town treasury for whatever expenses were incurred.

From Fletcher we get a comparatively full report of the celebration.[1] The Davis Guards arrived at South Acton at eight thirty on the morning of Saturday, August 10, 1861. A large crowd had assembled to give them welcome. After the usual cordial greetings a procession was formed and proceeded to the Centre in the following order: Colonel Winthrop E. Faulkner, chief marshal, assisted by Henry Wilder, James Wetherbee, and John H. Sanborn; National Band of Worcester; Union Guards, Captain Aaron C. Handley, fifty men; Liberty Guards, Captain S. Willis, forty men; Drum Corps; Hayward Guards, Captain Daniel Jones, sixty two men; Lowell Brigade Band (this band barely escaped alive at Baltimore); Davis Guards, Captain Daniel Tuttle, fifty two men; Concord Artillery, Captain Prescott, fifty four men; Detachment of Concord Artillery, with field pieces, Captain M. Hobson, twelve men; Chief Engineers of Concord Fire Department; Hook and Ladder Company, Charles Stowell, foreman, ten men; Independent Engine Co., Jonas Melvin, foreman, sixty men.[2]

A short distance out of the village of South Acton the procession was augmented by a large number of the citizens of Acton and adjoining towns who had been organized for the purpose under the direction of Mr. Samuel Hosmer. Upon the arrival of the military they fell into column in the rear and thus proceeded into the Centre. When the procession arrived at the speaker's stand a common prayer was offered by Rev. Alpha Morton after which Dr. John M. Miles, on behalf of the town, welcomed the returning soldiers in an eloquent address. Response to this was made by Dr. Harris Cowdrey on behalf of Captain Tuttle.

Colonel Faulkner made a brief address. At about half past twelve the companies formed into line and marched to the monument where three cheers were called for and heartily given to the American flag, and at the same time a beautiful new banner was run to the top of the flag pole by Willie Boss, from which point, as if by magic, it unfurled full sized into the air. The band played the "Star Spangled Banner", after which Hon. Charles Hudson of Lexington delivered a very able address.

After an intermission of an hour sentiments were offered by the

[1] Fletcher, p. 284.

[2] It is a matter of interest that in the parade Acton had two hundred and four men in line that were members of units that had seen or were to see service. The population of the town in 1860 was 1726.

toast-master, Oliver W. Mead and brief addresses were made by Rev. James Fletcher of Danvers (a native of Acton), Hon. E. W. Bull, George Stevens, John White (a member of Davis Guards and an Englishman who fought under the stars and stripes in the Mexican War), Hon. James M. Usher of Medford, George Brooks of Concord, Capt. Phelps, of Lexington, and Lieut. Bowers of the Concord Rifles.

There were about three thousand persons present. The route of the procession was profusely decorated with flags and mottoes as was the new store of James Tuttle & Co. at South Acton.[1] Over the armory appeared, "Davis Guards not afraid to go"; in the town house, "God defend the right"; on the monument, "Union, Davis, Hosmer, Hayward"; at Capt. Daniel Jones', "Welcome home"; at Lieutenant Jonas Blodgett's, "Honor to the brave"; at Hon. John Fletcher's, "First to go"; at E. S. Buffum's, "Safe Return"; and over J. Fletcher and Sons' store, "Through Baltimore".

A detachment of the Concord Artillery fired a national salute upon the arrival of the Guards at South Acton and also as the procession reached the centre of the town.[2]

In December of 1861 the town made another gesture for the benefit of the soldiers. It was voted that the selectmen be a committee to receive any moneys that the soldiers saw fit to send them for safe keeping, the same to be deposited and bear interest at six per cent.

The school report for the year ending as of February 1862 points out the dire need for new buildings, particularly in the east part of town, but cites the war as a reason for deferring action. It was at this time that the reports of the selectmen, the town clerk, and the school committee were first combined in a single pamphlet. An item of passing interest in the school report is that the teachers for the first time received four dollars and seventy five cents per week. Apparently at about this time also the state passed laws making it compulsory for the towns to arrange for a school superintendent.[3] In any event Acton voted on April 7th to engage a superintendent at a salary not to exceed forty dollars per month "pursuant of state statutes".

By July of 1862 the war fervor had cooled to the point where it became necessary to offer some inducements aside from base pay. In consequence Acton, on July 16th voted to pay a bounty of one hundred dollars to each volunteer on the day he was mustered in. The

[1] Exchange Hall, erected in 1860.

[2] Even wars have their moments of humor. Two aged residents once related years ago how on the day of the celebration a member of the Davis Guards who was full of spirits to the point of effusiveness, and was no paragon of intelligence under the best of conditions, was queried as to whether he would re-enlist. "By crackey! I guess not", said he, "you never saw such fellers as them Rebs, they jest ez soon shoot at a feller ez not".

[3] Chap. 38, section 35 of the general statutes of Massachusetts.

selectmen and the town treasurer were constituted a committee to recruit the required number of men to meet the town quota and to borrow all necessary amounts of money for the purpose.

As if war were not enough to swallow all the excess wealth of the town another scourge fell upon the people. On the evening of October 24, 1862 there occurred the greatest fire Acton ever had known. Some unknown incendiary had threatened by anonymous letter to leave a black mark in the Centre Village. He did his ghastly work well. Beginning at the stable near the hotel the flames took over the shoe manufactory of John Fletcher & Sons, the hotel, the store occupied by Daniel Jones, which also contained the tailor shop of Samuel Despeau and threatened the whole village. A blazing shingle was wafted across the Common and stuck on the very top of the town house (formerly the meeting house of 1807). Here at last was the fatal pay-off for long refusal to install proper fire fighting equipment. Groton had owned since 1802 a locally made pump that would put a stream over any house in town. The people of Acton, however, usually so efficient in civic affairs, had to stand by appalled and watch the whole building with all its massive timbers turn to ashes within an hour. It seemed on that dismal night as though the village was doomed to extinction.

But the old Acton spirit was not to be so readily downed. Just over a week later, at a town meeting on November 4th a committee consisting of Daniel Wetherbee, David Handley, Samuel Hosmer, Adelbert Mead, James Tuttle, and Cyrus Fletcher was instructed to obtain plans, specifications, and estimates for a new town house. It was further decided that when the committee was ready to report a special meeting would be called. In addition the selectmen were instructed to ascertain the expense for hooks, ladders and buckets for the several villages. This looked like progress in several directions but the astounding thing is that when the commitee reported on December 2nd the town not only voted not to build a town house but also dismissed the article relating to fire protection. It may have been sheer civic inertia or it may have been that the citizenry felt that it was already spending to the limit on war obligations. It may well have been this latter since at the same meeting it was voted that in the future the men who enlisted would be paid a bounty regardless of whether they were drafted or not.

One would have thought that this action settled the matter but within two weeks, on December 15th to be precise, a fully attended town meeting voted that when a new town house was built it should stand on the site of the one recently burned. It was further decided, and this is an amazing about face, from the fortnight previous, by a vote of 153 to 1 to elect by ballot a committee to build a town house

with a suitable armory and that the selectmen be authorized to borrow money as needed for the purpose.[1]

As a result of this decision the present town hall was erected the next year. The lower hall, a portion of which is now used for the town offices, was the armory. All along the front wall were lockers for the accoutrements of the members of the Davis Guards. Four or five of these are still in evidence and are used for miscellaneous storage.

The building of the town hall evidently inspired others with the result that the year 1863 saw also the erection of the large shoe manufactury of John Flecther and a new hotel by John E. Cutter. For many years the hotel housed the post office and the last remaining citizens of that era used to recall that there was installed a unique contrivance for mail delivery. It operated on the principle of the "Lazy Susan" sometimes seen on dining tables. There were pigeonholes marked with the letters of the alphabet. A person seeking mail would turn the wheel until his initial appeared at the opening whereupon he separated his mail from the rest and departed, unless of course the office happened to be vacant and he were of a curious turn of mind. In later years the device was abandoned and standard boxes installed with a pull bell that would summon the postmaster, the amiable Lucien Noyes, with his omnipresent straw hat which he wore as a piece of working equipment regardless of weather or season.

Under his direction the hostelry led an existence of quiet but definite distinction under the title of the Monument House. Summer guests who enjoyed the pleasing atmosphere of the secluded little village returned year after year and became a part of the community. They sang in the village choir and participated in the local dramatics upon occasion. They introduced tennis, which at that time was a game for young men and maidens of sedate mind and attire, by playing with unquestionable decorum on a court lined off on the common. No one put forth sufficient vigor to have a deleterious effect upon the grass. It was not unusual for certain of the women, who still cherished a penchant for Victorian convention, to wear a stiff sailor hat.

Each morning at seven o'clock the mail carrier set forth for South Acton. For a long time this service was performed by Grandpa Jennings, an old gentleman with a loud voice who was regarded with awe by the children. He drove a black topped delivery wagon of the type which appears at the extreme right of the frontispiece. He was succeeded by Oliver Houghton, better known as "Dolly", a name which he had inherited from his father.

Although a person of moderate capabilities Oliver was fired by

[1] Daniel Wetherbee, Samuel Hosmer, James Tuttle, Cyrus Fletcher, David Handley, A. M. Rowell, Luther Conant.

the conviction that the success of the United States Mail service hinged upon his personal punctuality. For a quarter expectant passengers could ride between the Centre and South Acton in his carryall. This conveyance he clung to through thick and thin. The arrival of the motor car made no slightest impression upon him. In his latter days he lived in the upstairs portion of the store of Mr. George Noyes which now houses the office of Mr. Boatman and the Monument Shoppe.

He was Acton's most innate inhabitant without doubt. Only a family crisis of major magnitude could get him out of town. It was his boast that once he took the train to the North Station, where, upon arrival, he walked to the front door, took one look at the bustling city life and thereupon returned at the earliest possible opportunity.

He indulged in none of the usual male pastimes. Hunting, fishing, and ball games did not attract him. His chief diversion was attending funerals, and this he took seriously and must have established a record of sorts.

On hand without fail for the opening of the postmaster's wicket was Spofford Robbins, a bachelor hermit, with much the general appearance of Uncle Sam. He operated a small woodworking shop and an apiary on the site of the residence of the late Elizabeth Forbes on Woodbury Lane. He was a clever workman who was reputed to have done much of the inside finish of the Memorial Library but he was an extreme individualist of the old school and would work only when and for whom he pleased. For long periods he would have nothing to do with diverse persons for reasons known only to himself, then, without any word of explanation, would return to his former friendliness. In his latter years the old fellow lived and died on Wheeler Lane in North Acton where, with his sister, the late Emma Blood, an equally mercurial character, an existence of sensitively balanced semi-tranquility eventually ended for both of them.

In due course Mr. Noyes moved into the house now owned by the Boatmans and took the post office with him, establishing it in the westerly ell since it had a convenient entrance from the main street. The Monument House was operated for a while on a declining scale by a Mr. Harriman, an ex-attache of the Barnum and Bailey Circus, who, while he had at his finger tips all the devious angles of that hectic business, had neither the acumen nor the temperament to make a success of a country hotel.

On July 4th, 1913, the building was gutted by fire and the two great barns were reduced to ashes. The ruins stood as an eyesore until in the spring of 1916 the town voted to take measures in the matter. The aforesaid measures were not specifically laid down and nothing was done immediately, but on the night of July 3rd either local

pranksters or truly civic minded individuals set the ruins ablaze. An out of town visitor from Kentucky who witnessed the conflagration asserted that never had he seen a competent fire department work so hard to make sure that a burning building should be a total loss.[1]

In April of 1863 two matters, although somewhat minor as compared to events on the national stage, did nevertheless show progress in town affairs. For the first time in its history Acton attained the fifteen hundred dollar mark in the school appropriation and at the same time Francis Dwight was chosen as superintendent of burials and was allotted the amount of two dollars for each interment. This was evidently the beginning of the practice of hiring a caretaker for the cemetery although no mention is made that Mr. Dwight's duties went beyond the digging of graves. It can be readily understood, however, that as time went on other activities were added and more reimbursement became the custom.. Acton has always been noted for the interest it took in the upkeep of its burying grounds and the excellent results obtained by the present corps of workers has claimed the attention of numerous outsiders.

The very next year, in April of 1864, in addition to Mr. Dwight the town elected William D. Tuttle and Zoheth Taylor as a committee to take charge of the cemeteries and present regulations respecting their management to a subsequent town meeting.

The same meeting, thinking that the war was more than enough to contend with in the matter of jeopardy of human life, again took up the case against the Fitchburg Railroad. The selectmen were appointed as agents to confer with the railroad authorities in the attempt to devise means to render "life more secure at the crossings".

At the meeting in November a vote of thanks was extended to the donors of the "new clocks in the town house". The present conviction among the older residents is that the money was raised by public subscription. The reference is almost certainly to the four faces of the clock in the tower, particularly since a sum of twenty five dollars per year was authorized for their care. For many years the clock was kept in excellent running condition by Mr. Oliver D. Wood, largely from sentiment rather than for the remuneration involved, but attention to it in the present era has shrunk to the vanishing point.

By 1864 the war had become a wearysome and discouraging affair for all concerned. Many in the North thought that Lincoln had managed things miserably and that his election was doubtful. Acton voters, however, were in general undismayed and supported Lincoln by a vote of 202 as compared with 147 for General George B.

[1] A glimpse of the Monument House can be seen at the extreme left of the frontispiece.

McClellan, the Democratic nominee. In the state at large the vote was Lincoln 126,742, McClellan 48,745 and in the gubernatorial contest Governor Andrew defeated Henry W. Paine by 125,281 to 49,190.

Apropos of the dismal state of affairs mentioned above it is good to remember that even the most dreary circumstances may produce a bit of humor. One episode is too good to omit, not only because of its intrinsic interest but because, although Acton residents were completely ignorant of it, it had a profound bearing upon the country at large and hence upon the local scene.

The persistent conviction of Lincoln's ineptness, together with the antagonistic attitude concerning the draft in certain quarters, caused acute concern in the Republican camp. In this connection Mr. Lincoln, fearing for the result of the state election in Indiana in October, and knowing that Indiana was the only major state that would not permit its soldiers to vote in the field, communicated his apprehensions to General Sherman. He pointed out that if forces came into control who would oppose the war in every way possible it might mean defeat, and hence implored the general to do all he could within reason and military expediency to see that the Indiana men were furloughed home to vote.[1]

Sherman, who as history proves, never did things by halves, so enthusiastically carried out the desires of his commander-in-chief that thousands of the Hoosier boys went home and — along with them for good measure, since their own state was as dependable as its native granite — went also the 19th Vermont, in toto. With a modicum of assistance from the local patriots they all voted and Indiana went Republican.

While on the topic of war humor it will not be amiss to mention a hitherto unpublicized tale which is directly associated with Acton. Shortly after the cessation of hostilities there arrived in town a young veteran from a New York regiment who married an Acton girl and eventually became a successful contractor in one of the towns of Worcester County.

He was a pronounced eccentric as to his mental reactions, his attire, and his mannerisms and attracted attention upon his infrequent visits to the local scene. Any doubt concerning his unusual turn of mind, and his almost limitless energy is established by the fact that for the major portion of his courting days he resided in Acton Centre and walked morning and night to Rockbottom to his work. One quirk of his mind caused him to have on his monument in Woodlawn a brief but cryptic inscription that has caught the eye of many a casual observer.

He was a voracious and discerning reader of history and revelled

[1] Commager, *The Blue and the Gray*, vol. 1, p. 297.

in the telling of peculiar episodes that generally had some basis in fact but which, if the listener were unlearned or naive, were liable to snowball into shameless lies of colossal dimensions. One of these, as he told it, was so eminently in character, so surely the sort of thing that would have tickled his inmost soul, that it is indubitably authentic.

It appears that he was one afternoon stationed as a sentry on the bank of the Chickahominy River in Virginia at a point where it was sufficiently narrow to permit easy conversation with the rebel lookout on the opposite side. It shortly became apparent that the Southerner was an illiterate and unsophisticated swamp boy from the Louisiana bayous.

The temptation was overpowering so the blue clad soldier related at length his military experiences; his march over the Alps with Hannibal; his landing on the shores of England with William the Conqueror; and finally his prodigious exploits with the armies of the Union. With this impressive build-up he asserted that the South was so hopelessly outnumbered that the eventual decision of the conflict was a certainty

According to the narrator something approaching the following dialogue then took place.

"Ah doan' know", said the boy in grey, "I ain't got learnin' but you sound ter me jest like a onery abolition liar."

"I'm telling you the truth Johnny. Now take your own case. How many Louisiana regiments are there."

"Doan rightly know Yank. Mought be thirty, mebbe even more."

"Well, there you are. My regiment is the 888th Delaware".[1]

With his eyes practically hanging on his cheeks the rebel youth finally gained sufficient control of his voice to exclaim, "Great Day in the Mawnin'! Thar must be a power of ye".

This individual according to a statement made by the captain of his company long after the war, enlisted for two years, served with distinction and was honorably discharged. Thereupon, without re-enlisting and without pay he remained with the company for some fourteen months. In the latter part of the conflict when recruits were difficult to obtain the officers were not too vigilant as to the minutiae of cases of this type. Finally, due to a fit of pique, or boredom, or mere deviltry, he walked away one day, acquired a new environment, a new identity, and a new life, after doing what, according to his lights, was his share of military duty.

[1] The enormity of this tale will perhaps be more apparent to the modern reader if he is made aware that Delaware had but nine regiments of infantry in the Union Army.

Eventually the war drain in financial matters became acute.[1] Expenses crop up over and over again in the records. On November 30th fifty five hundred dollars was voted for recruiting costs. Some items went unpaid for long periods. It was not until March of 1865, for instance, that the town decided to renumerate the private individuals who furnished teams and wagons to transport the soldiers to Lowell in 1862. In March of 1866 an article in the warrant inquired whether the town would pay the soldiers who enlisted in 1861 and re-enlisted in 1864 the same bounty as was paid to those who enlisted after that date and served in the United States Army. It was decided to defer action until it became apparent what the national government intended to do in the matter. As things later developed this proved to be an unwise decision but at that time nobody could have forseen that by this action the town planted the seeds for its most vicious and prolonged local battle.

Sometime during the war period Mr. S. S. Richardson bought from Abel Jones the land and water privilege on what is now River Street for the purpose of building a woolen mill. He put in the first dam but with the cessation of the war the project languished. By 1890, however, a thriving shoddy[2] business was in full swing under the able direction of Mr. J. A. Bowen. According to Fletcher the enterprise was grossing one hundred thousand dollars annually and hiring thirty hands.

In 1899 the mill was bought by William Rawitser. He was subsequently joined by his brother Fred and the partnership continued until 1914. From that date William conducted a large and successful business until his death in 1934. A new dam and extensive alterations were made in 1935. During World War II no shoddy was used in blankets or uniforms, not even wool clips from tailors. The plant was totally consumed by fire on February 23, 1951.

For the year 1866 there appear odds and ends of information in the records that while in themselves more or less unimportant are intriguing and of passing interest. For instance the town bought a new hearse. At that time such an accessory was not a part of the undertaking business since the care of the dead had not then reached the polished levels of the present. The transition from the simple undertaker to the modern suave mortician still lay in the future. In addition the town clerk was paid on a piece work basis rather than on a salary. The going rate was thirty cents for recording each birth, nineteen cents for deaths and fifteen cents for marriages. Just

[1] The single sheet report of the selectmen for 1864 is an interesting example of war economy.

[2] For the information of those unfamiliar with the term "shoddy" it may be defined as a method of reprocessing the fibre in old woolen cloth so that it could be woven into new wool products.

why a marriage was only half as important as a death is not made clear. About the same time Cyrus Fletcher received forty four dollars for attending twenty two funerals with the hearse and George Sawyer was paid twenty cents for tolling the bell at each death. Apropos of this custom of bell ringing it may be here observed that the warrant for the April meeting of 1867 contains the last record of an article respecting the question of ringing the town bells on holidays and other special occasions. The article was dismissed and the custom died then and there so far as town responsibility went. Volunteer patriots continued to shatter the rural calm on April 19th and the 4th of July for another seven decades or more but now even that has become a memory of the past. Modern youth lives too continually in the shadow of war to be intrigued.

Another item that makes the modern tax payer sigh is an entry to the effect that in the winter of 1867 Luther Billings received eleven dollars and ninety cents for sixty four and a half hours labor breaking out the roads after heavy snowfalls. Moreover, to return to the burial of the dead for a moment, Cyrus Fletcher was paid twelve dollars and seventy five cents for a coffin and robe for the funeral of Luther Hayward.

The report of the school committee for the year 1866 is unduly long and leans noticeably to the forensic side. Considerable light is shed upon prevailing conditions by the fact that male teachers are advocated, "who can administer correction forthwith and upon the spot". Complaint is made that truancy is all too customary and that certain pupils recite in a low and feeble voice, a shortcoming that should be remedied by considerable exercise in loud speaking and distinct articulation. In addition to the common schools there were also functioning several private schools. The committee report mentions four of these with a combined enrollment of one hundred and ten pupils.

It was at this time also that the town chose its first superintendent of schools, Rev. Edwin Davis, who was to serve for the year 1867. Perhaps this event was induced by the fact that the town had at last passed the two thousand dollar limit in the matter of school appropriations. The money was allocated after considerable debate as follows: to the south and west districts $644.33 each, to the centre district $449.92, and to the north and east districts $244.40 each. Furthermore, and this must have made the teachers dismal, a weekly report was to be sent to the parents relative to absences, deportment, recitations, and general progress for each pupil. This is the first mention of report cards, and, however severe it may have been on the teachers, we find the school committee stating in the next town report that "the use of scholarship and deportment cards introduced

by vote of the town a year ago has proved most beneficial".

The report goes on the advocate at length the need for a new choice of text, particularly in arithmetic and grammar. The assertion is made that too much time is being devoted to arithmetic.

Here we see for the first time the beginnings of the effort to simplify the curriculum to make it painless. The modern progressive schools are the full flowering of this pernicious movement which now, after nearly a century, is being denounced by the abler school men themselves in their annual conventions. In all probability the texts were acceptable. There is no way to make these two subjects effortless for the average youngster while at the same time keeping the content respectable. It is no kindness to emasculate a subject to the point where the pupil feels no sense of accomplishment.

Another innovation at this time was the publication of the roll of honor for those pupils who had been neither absent nor tardy for one, two, or three terms. Those who had perfect attendance for three terms deserve a place in the record and their names are given below.

Centre: Susie Tuttle, Nellie Hanscom, Jenny Berry, Etta Taylor, Lizzie Roth, Willie Richardson, Josie Forbush.

West: George Mead, Lizzie Eager, Flora S. Davis, Ellen M. Hosmer, Emma Hosmer, Julian Mead, Ainsworth Hastings.

South: Lucy Jones, Mary F. Worcester, Anna Tuttle, Willie E. Wood.

North: (None for three terms), Two terms; Cora Granville, Fred Rouillard.

East: (None for three terms), Two terms; Susie Wetherbee.

South-east: Lester N. Fletcher.

In the same year (1867) one of Acton's abler craftsmen, Mr. John Sherman Hoar[1], father of the present John Hoar, perfected a type of vise with an off-shot jaw, thereby making it possible for a workman if he so desired to hold in a vertical position a long piece of pipe or a wooden rod. The original model, beautifully finished in what appears to be cherry, is a prized possession of the family. Patents were secured in England, Germany, and America and the New England Vise Company erected in West Acton a building still standing near the junction of Central and Willow Streets, and started operations in 1868. Previously the inventor had been offered two hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the patent rights by a man from Baltimore. Mr. Hoar was inclined to sell but the two partners who had gone into the venture with him felt otherwise. Subsequently the vise was changed in design to accomodate a rotary head. In 1870 the business was sold to a firm in Fitchburg. When Mr. James

[1] John Sherman Hoar was born in Acton in 1829. He preferred to be known as Sherman J. Hoar and enlisted under that name in the Civil War. The present Mr. Hoar is John Sherman Hoar, Jr.

Kinsley was postmaster at West Acton letters came from Kansas City addressed to the New England Vise Company and he, knowing of the history of the affair saw to it that they were delivered to the present Mr. Hoar. Within twenty years inquiries have also come from Australia asking for information.

Mr. Hoar, now well into his nineties, is the town's senior carpenter and builder by a wide margin. He is still alert and bubbling with humor and has been additionally blessed by the fact that his wife until very recently has been able to keep his domicile in operating condition as in the years long past. He has been kind enough to amplify his reminiscences concerning a number of things relative to the village that deserve a place here.

At the turn of the century there stood between the Baptist Church and Arlington St. the blacksmith shop of Samuel Guilford and John McNiff and the wheelright shop of Herbert Clark. They were torn down some years ago and Mr. F. H. Charter, who bought the land and the Guilford house, has exercised his abilities as a landscape gardener to improve the spot beyond recognition.

In 1871 B. F Taft began the manufacture of tubs, pails, and churns, was succeeded by Samuel Sargent and later by Enoch Hall, whose sons carried on the business for many years. The Halls put in a saw mill, a churn building, and a large storehouse. They bought standing white pine wherever possible and did their own lumbering, sawed their own stavestock, and prepared all the materials for the production of their merchandise. Before the arrival of the automobile and the concommitant clearance of the snow from the highways it was an interesting and common sight to see the huge sled loads of logs, drawn by four sturdy horses, enroute to the mill from the surrounding countryside. Eventually the decrease in the churn market and the influx of metal pails and tubs brought about the close of the business in 1932. The mill buildings are at present owned by Sidney Laffin and house his garage and the town school busses.

The building which now houses the drug store in West Acton has had a long acquaintance with merchandising. Associated with it are the names of Burbeck and Tenney, Taylor Brothers, a Mr. Hastings, Nelson Conant, who functioned there in the 1870's and was at one time in partnership with his brother Albert Conant in Littleton, and then Mr. Charles Mead who conducted a general store for a long period.

Upstairs in the rear was a grain storage area and here was born one of the town's most amazing enterprises. Here Mr. George Conant made his first experiments with bluine, the laundry accessory that was eventually to make him a fortune. Mr. Waldo Whitcomb relates how Mr. Conant, whose economic status in those days

was not a matter of envy, used to come into his meat market and solicit sheets of the butcher's standard porus wrapping paper then in vogue. These were then immersed in a bath of bluine solution having sugar as an adhesive agent by the much be-blued Johnny Cleary, who came to be known locally as Johnny Bluine, and were strung on lines to drip and dry. Thereafter they were cut into small rectangles that were sorted into dozen lots and mailed to school children all over the United States to be sold at ten cents a package.

This merchandising technique was something new under the sun and at first the Post Office Department cast a rather vinegar eye upon the whole scheme. Eventually Mr. Conant was given a clean bill of health on this issue and he, and his youthful agents, who were given modest prizes, did a colossal business both in this country and abroad. In due course the West Acton quarters were completely inadequate and a new building was erected a few rods to the rear of the post office in West Concord. When the project was at top productivity it was rather a sight to behold the sugar arriving by the carload.

When the enterprise had run its course Mr. Whitcomb was sent to England to negotiate the closing of the offices there following similar action in France and Germany. He was available for this purpose because he had sold his meat business to Mr. Ellis Harlow but upon his return he bought it back again to the satisfaction of both parties.

Mr. Conant had an unusual sentiment for the old Windsor Hotel and for a time owned the building and had the name painted in large letters on the side facing the railroad. It stood on the corner of the streets now known as Massachusetts Ave. and Windsor Ave. The old hotel and a large garage beside it, together with a two apartment house, were burned in 1922. In the same year Mr. George Mead and his wife bought the property and built the present brick block which houses a cafe, the post office, a store, and five apartments. At the same time there was also built a four apartment building on Windsor Ave.

The building in West Acton known as Littlefield's store was originally an old barn. When Mr. Frank Knowlton started his cigar manufacturing project the first location was on the second floor of this building. In 1889 the business had expanded sufficiently so that it was moved to the newly erected and more ample quarters immediately to east of the large apartment block next to the school house. For years this enterprise, with Mr. Frank Knowlton managing the factory and Mr. Octavius Knowlton in the field, did a thriving business and provided employment for some thirty men and women in the production of the well known Yankee Star cigar. One of the workers of those days recalls that in rush times some twenty five girls were kept busy. A deft girl could finish more that five hundred cigars

a day. The building was eventually purchased by Mr. Albert Jenks, torn down, and rebuilt on Central St. as a cold storage plant.

Mr. Frank Knowlton was a member of Co. M, 1st Maine Regiment, was an active member of the G. A. R., and for more than a quarter of a century was a trustee of the Memorial Library.

Mr. Charles Robinson at one time bought a piece of land on the edge of the village towards Acton Centre and erected a large building with two extensions or ells. The main portion of the first floor housed a grocery store. One of the ells was used for men's furnishings and the other for women's wear. On the second floor were three tenements. Some two hundred feet to the rear he built a sort of men's club containing a smoking room, card room and two bowling alleys. Many years later Mr. Hoar tore it down and erected from the second hand lumber a bowling alley on private property for a gentleman in Harvard.

The brick building that now houses the telephone exchange was originally the residence of Bradley Stone and his blacksmith shop stood close by.

About 1882 a factory for the manufacture of overalls and white yachting suits employed some twenty girls for five years or more. The building now stands on Kinsley Road and functions as a private dwelling.

The combination grain, grist, and cider mill of Edwin C. Parker & Co. was built in 1868, burned in 1869, and rebuilt in 1870. The Parkers, father and sons, continued to operate the business until well into the first decade of the present century. In 1908 Mr. George Henry Reed, a native of Acton, who had for many years conducted a successful grain and lumbering business in East Dorset, Vt., bought out the Parker interest and continued to operate it until his death in his eighty ninth year in 1942. In 1909 he also assumed the management of the mills at South Acton. Mr. Reed was a direct descendent of Joseph Reed of Davis' company at Concord Bridge. It was a further coincidence that his grandfather, William Reed while repairing the roof of the famous Faulkner Mills in 1812 received his summons to report for duty in the war. A century later Mr. Reed assumed the responsibility of the same mills. In 1940 the younger of his two sons, George Howard Reed, took charge of the business and he and his wife, Marion, are at present active in that capacity and in the civic affairs of the town.

In 1873 the Butter and Cheese Factory Company was incorporated and ran for three or four years. The venture proved unsuccessful and eventually the first floor was used for many years by William Lawrence as a blacksmith shop, and after him by a Mr. Bisbee. The upper floor was used by Waldo Littlefield as a paint shop for vehicles

of all sorts. The building is now owned by James E. Kinsley to house the supplies of the Acton Pipe Company.

It will come as a surprise to many to learn that no sooner had Acton striven mightily to put down secession on a national scale than it had to combat a similar attempt within its own confines. The town records give no hint of this growing sentiment but at a meeting held on November 3rd 1868, at which there was a large attendance and much debate, the following resolution eventually prevailed by a vote of 204 to 45.

> *"Whereas, certain citizens of the district of West Acton have declared their intentions, if it can be effected, of cutting themselves off from the town of Acton, and in connection with Boxborough establishing a new town; and since said town of Acton believes that small towns labor under great disadvantage in reference to sustaining social, literary and religious institutions and said town of Acton is too small already and has not a farm or a family to spare, and should seek to add to rather than cut off any of its population and territory and since the division of the town as proposed would detract from its historic fame and since said town of Acton is ready to receive any part or all of the said town of Boxborough, Therefore resolved that we as a town persistently oppose its dismemberment and choose a committee of seven persons with full powers to employ counsel and take such means and measures as in their judgement is advisable to save the town from prospective trouble and ruin; the expense of the same to be borne by the said town of Acton."*

The committee chosen to take this uprising in hand consisted of Daniel J. Wetherbee, William W. Davis, John Fletcher, Luther Conant, Aaron Handley, George Gardner, and William D. Tuttle. This was an able, alert, and conscientious group which could not fail to command the utmost respect of every citizen of Acton, except possibly some of the disgruntled minority who, according to legend, were less interested in doing Boxborough a favor than in finding "lebensraum" for a town cut to their pattern. That such a committee succeeded in its efforts was not unexpected but it was fortuitous for the future of both towns concerned.

The project was not as much of a flash in the pan as the vote indicates. The majority of the people of Boxborough were favorable to the formation of a new town. The records give no clue as to the contemplated name. Apparently the matter dragged on for months since more than a year later, on November 30, 1869, a Boxborough town meeting convened to consider the article, "Resolved that the

town of Boxborough unite with that part of Acton called West Acton", passed an affirmative vote of 49 to 11 and instructed a special committee to use every effort to bring about the union.[1]

The eventual throttling of the scheme was a matter of considerable chagrin to numerous Boxborough citizens. The scroll of time may prove it to have been a blessing. In that era the town was truly isolated and very sparsely settled. The trend was toward the cities and size and bustle were in the minds of many confused with progress and the full life. So Boxborough has had to go it alone but its way has been long, dignified and honorable. Its leading citizens have been persons of courage, industry, character, and of high repute throughout the countryside. Their offspring have made names for themselves in the far places and have always had a unified and venerable community they could call home.

On one point there can be slight doubt. The coterie in West Acton that started the scheme was motivated by no altruistic notions with respect to the established families of old Boxborough. To so believe is to ignore the whole history of human conduct. Very shortly the rural community would have found itself perpetually out-voted and more or less ignored except as an expansion area for its vigorous and ambitious new bedfellow. It takes no seer to appreciate this fact. It is merely the history of growing America and in such forced unions the lesser party has usually been disallusioned too late. A farming community of three hundred cannot absorb a thriving industrial unit of several times that number. If one seeks local illustrations they are readily available in the cases of old Groton and Ayer and Stow, Sudbury and Maynard. In those instances the up-start village was a part of the parent body and there was much in common but nevertheless the child outgrew the household and eventually went its way alone to the relief of all concerned. To have tried to combine two communities with diverse backgrounds and interests would have been mixing oil and water. The thing could work only if one group was either supine or ruthlessly submerged.

With the arrival of the automobile, long haul trucking to every isolated country store, and modern methods of snow removal, there has come a decided drift of suburban folk to the rural areas. Added to this has come recently the superhighway that has put Boxborough within forty five minutes of Boston. It, as in the case of Carlisle and the remoter portions of Acton, are now sought after. The careworn subsistence farmer of a former day is no more. The modern commuter is independent of the soil. He can pay his taxes and in general

[1] *Boxborough, a New England Town and Its People*, published 1891 by Lucie Caroline Hager. For this reference the author is indebted to the present town clerk of Boxborough, Florence E. Smith. The same material appears in Hurd, *History of Middlesex County* vol. 2, p. 773.

A legend for which the author has failed to find written evidence asserts that the projected name of the new town was Bromfield.

comes with a sincere desire to be welcome and to make a contribution to the new environment. It may well be that within a generation the hopes of eighty years ago will be realized in the form of a well knit and attractive residential town whose life stream has been kept unique and whose independence preserved.

It was in this same year, 1868, that Mr. Luther Conant took charge of the Centre School for the winter term with outstanding success. The school report states that, "He knows exactly what to do and how to do it in the best manner". In those days of low standards of pupil deportment this was excessive praise. Furthermore it was deserved since Mr. Conant was an accomplished and dignified man and a rigid disciplinarian as well. He would have been anathema to the modern theorists because his pupils feared him but they respected him mightily and testified to his interest and fairness to the end of their lives. He later became one of the town's most prominent citizens and performed for it innumerable services of trust for over half a century.

In March of 1869 it was voted to begin the erection of a series of more commodious school buildings. Among the factors leading to the decision was the problem of school discipline mentioned above. As a matter of fact it was practically non-existent in certain districts. The teachers were only partially to blame. In open town meeting the school committee put the matter squarely on the shoulders of the parents and accused them of studied non-cooperation. In one instance, to emphasize their point, the committee published the following excerpt from a letter received by a disgruntled and departing teacher:

"I shall not, for any consideration, enter into an arrangement to teach this school again; for besides hearing in a thorough manner some twenty recitations a day, they expect me to thrash some of the larger boys into obedience, which I consider neither right nor proper to expect of any female."

In another case Miss Nellie Bradley, an experienced teacher hired for the winter term at the South Intermediate School, left after three days because of the impossible behaviour of the pupils.[1]

To one who knows the foregoing facts there is much eloquence in the item appearing in the school report of 1870 wherein the school board congratulates itself because during the session there had been no cases of open rebellion.

Any Acton youngster of fifty years ago who was in the habit of traversing the highway that passes Woodlawn Cemetery was familiar

[1] *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*, by Edward Eggleston, vividly portrays the teacher tribulations of the period. It was during the winter term that the older boys took advantage of the hiatus in farm labor to attend school. They were frequently as much as five years behind their age group and considered it a civic duty to oust the teacher if possible, by annoyance if a woman, and by force if a man.

with the old Robbins family tomb with its iron door set in the cemetery wall. Today the opening is walled up but the spot is readily recognizable to one who seeks it. Previous to 1870 it had been the practice of the town to hire from Elbridge Robbins the use of the tomb as a respository for the bodies of those who died during the winter months when the ground was too deeply frozen to permit immediate burial. For this accomodation a rental of one dollar a year was in force. In 1870 it was decided to erect a new tomb of much larger capacity to meet the needs of increased population. It is this tomb that stands today beside the building which for many years housed the town hearse but which now serves as a tool shop. One use to which the tomb has been put, that never entered the minds of the builders we are certain, was that of a lunch and siesta room. During the years when Asaph Parlin and Nathaniel Brown cared for the cemetery in the 1910 era they sought relief frequently from the noon-day heat of summer by emptying their dinner pails in the cool of the tomb and thereafter taking a thirty minute nap on the coffin benches before resuming the afternoon duties.

The granite for the tomb was for the most part purchased from William Reed[1] and probably came from a shallow quarry on his farm. The builders were William Reed, Solomon Dutton, John Harris, Daniel Harris, Luke Smith and Ai Robbins. The hauling was done by Luke Tuttle and Charles Wheeler.[2] The committee in charge of the building of the tomb consisted of the selectmen plus Francis Dwight.

It may well be mentioned here that in this same year the town decided to pay honor to Ezekiel Davis, brother of Isaac Davis, who was wounded at Concord Fight, by erecting a headstone at his grave, which for fifty years had gone unmarked since his death in 1820 at the age of sixty eight. There were two reasons for this lapse of time. The first was the fact that Ezekiel Davis was practically a pauper in his later years; the second was sheer neglect on the part of the town. The marker now standing at his grave was erected "at a cost not to exceed fifty dollars".

It was in 1870 also that one of Acton's best known and respected merchants, Mr. Emery Taylor, launched himself, at the age of twenty one, in a general store business that was to set a record in the town

[1] William Reed lived on the farm now occupied by William Kazokas on Arlington Street. He received $69.60 for granite and $60.00 for labor. John White was also paid $10.00 for granite. (Not to be confused with the William Reed who lived on the present Rimbach place)

[2] Charles Wheeler lived for many years on the Isaac Davis homestead. Luke Tuttle lived in the homestead now owned by Wallace Sherry in Acton Centre. In Mr. Tuttle's day a huge cow barn stood in the area between the house and the driveway that now goes to the stone garage to the rear. Mr. Luke Tuttle's son, Harry, built the stone building for apple storage.

annals. For sixty five years under his management the inventory increased until it was well nigh impossible to name an article that could not be found somewhere in the recesses of the rambling establishment. Today a fraction of it houses the present store and the Centre post office. In the heyday, however, the merchandise also filled a large shed in the rear and spilled over into the huge barn that forty years ago stood some few rods to the rear of the present residence of Mr. Norman Collins.

Throughout Mr. Taylor's benign regime the enterprise retained its flavor as an old fashioned country store. In the rear was the pot-bellied stove, set in sand and surrounded by the smooth worn chairs of the village sages. On a winter day, while politics and tall tales went on amain, the proprietor and his two sons were busy selling blasting powder and chewing tobacco, axe handles and corsets, putty and Epsom salts, horse collars and embroidery hoops, porus plasters and barbed wire fencing. Upon occasion the diamond dye got into the box labelled "grass seed" but that was an insignificant trifle to a clerk who knew the stock. Until late in his career the kindly merchant escaped fussing with the mass of modern packaged goods. In the good old days flour, corn meal, beans, peas, raisins, and even crackers and cookies came by the barrel as did also kerosene, vinegar, molasses, and shellac. When the customer bought he did not expect to return in a few hours. He loaded up once and for all. Only rarely was there a female clerk so it was Mr. Taylor himself,[1] a jolly, honest, and circumspect person, who accompanied the women to the upstairs regions for the purchase of the more intimate articles.

In 1935, at the age of eighty six, Mr. Taylor found it necessary to relinquish active connection with the store. Since then, first under the management of Mr. Dewey Boatman, and subsequently under the present proprietor, more modern methods have been introduced and extensive alterations made. Nevertheless, modern technique, however profitable and efficient, cannot replace the old general store as a unique institution and as a forum for local public opinion. One case in point seems apropos. No amount of listening to the election returns over the radio can match the thrill that came to the eager local politicians of both parties as they congregated in the old store to exult or dispair while the proprietor at the telephone announced the results far into the night.

In the autumn of 1870 the Davis Monument was honored by a visit of the state military encampment at Concord, under the com-

[1] Moses Emery Taylor, born March 18, 1849; died February 20, 1937. The elder son, Wilmot Taylor, clerked in the store throughout his lifetime, until it ceased operations as a Taylor project. He is now retired and living in Stow. The younger son, Simon, now deceased, ran the delivery wagon for a portion of his earlier years.

mand of General Benjamin F. Butler. According to Fletcher the noon hour in camp was a busy scene of preparation for the afternoon march to Acton. While dinner was yet being served the drums of the First Brigade were heard in the distance to the right and the long line was marked by its dust, winding its way by a circuitous route to the review field. In half an hour the other brigades were on the march and at a quarter of two five thousand men were in line. The infantry were on the right and center and the whole artillery and cavalry were massed on the left.

At two o'clock General Butler, mounted on his white horse, and with his full staff, took his place at the head of the division and rode out at the north corner on to the Concord road. The marching column was about a mile and a quarter in length. The route from Concord to Acton was largely the same as that which the Acton troops took in the Revolution, the division marching in column of fours.

The head of the column reached Acton at ten minutes after four o'clock. The selectmen, W. W. Davis, Elbridge Robbins, Jr., and Charles Robinson, with a committee of citizens, both men and women, had made preparations to welcome the troops. Houses were decorated and numerous barrels of lemonade and apples were in readiness.

The monument and the town hall were elegantly decorated. The streets and the Common were crowded with people in holiday attire. Mr. Davis, chairman of the Board of Selectmen, addressed General Butler in an eloquent and earnest manner. The General responded as follows:

> *"On behalf of the soldiers of Massachusetts gathered here in your good old town, I thank you for your earnest welcome and for your offered hospitality. It seems most pleasant to us to find so beautiful a resting place after our long and weary march. You have referred to the services of the militia in the late war, and you will allow me to say that the character and conduct of Co. E of Acton evidenced that the spirit of the Revolutionary sires has not died out of the good old town of Acton.*
>
> *"You have the honor of having erected the third monument of the war of the Revolution and of having suffered among the first in that struggle. You have earned the right to say that the sons will, by deed and work, keep green the memories of this historic spot. You and they have made a noble record, and, as it has been in the past, so may it be in the future.*
>
> *"I doubt not that the sight of this monument, and the*

thought that we stand on the ground made sacred by the ashes of the heroes, will be of value to the military of Massachusetts in increasing in their bosoms the emotions of patriotism, and inspire them to be able defenders of the institution for which Davis, Hosmer and Hayward fell.

"We rejoice that we are able to be here and thank you again for the welcome and the bounty with which you greet us. We propose to close our response by a salute of thirteen guns, which will be fired by one of our light batteries, as a further tribute of respect and affection for the men of Acton living and dead."

Forthwith the salute was given and thus ended one of the major assemblages on Acton Common in honor of its Revolutionary heroes.

Although competent authorities never felt justified in according General Butler any considerable military acumen he was, nevertheless, a mighty patriot, a criminal lawyer of much power, and altogether a most colorful character. An interesting episode connects him with Acton in an unusual manner. In an old scrapbook that formerly belonged to Rev. Franklin P. Wood there is a portion of a letter in Butler's own hand. It is impossible to ascertain at this late date just what the subject under discussion was but it appears that the General and the clergyman had carried on some correspondence concerning a third party who must remain unknown. Apparently this third party had entertained some convictions regarding certain remarks of Butler's and Mr. Wood had communicated the fact to the General, whose reply contained the following lines:

"I will agree to give ten dollars to your charity plate on the following Sunday if your intelligent "bull" friend will declare upon his honor that he had read the full text of my speech or an authorized version, either the Traveller or the Congressional Record. If I am correct as to the man you will pardon me for saying that I never reason with the head of an ass or the heels of a mule"

I am, with friendly regards, yours truly

BENJ. F. BUTLER

It is the author's conviction that the forward portion of the letter contained the name of the suspect but that Mr. Wood removed it as a matter of policy.

Apparently the General lost his bet since upon turning over the page of the scrapbook the following note appears:

Washington
April 1, '78

My dear Sir,

I give up. I have written today because I was stupid

enough, even in the good cause of charity, to bet against the effect of human stupidity, ineffable, inexhaustible, unfathomable and eternal. Enclosed please find the $10 *for some starving workingman's family.*

Yours truly,
BENJ. F. BUTLER

In October of 1870 there was an unusual article in the warrant of a special town meeting, namely, "to see if the town will purchase one or more freezers for the preservation of corpses". The article was dismissed but the wording of it demands some explanation for the present day reader. Embalming had not at that time come into general practice and hence freezing had been an alternative technique. Some light is thrown upon this matter by an advertisement appearing in a pamphlet printed in Acton some eight years later wherein Mr. L. E. Reed makes known to the public that he makes picture frames and room mouldings and also "makes a specialty of embalming and am prepared to preserve the dead any reasonable length of time, this process being preferable to freezing".

In view of the fact that at present large numbers of outsiders are being buried in the Acton cemeteries it is interesting to record that in 1871 the town seriously debated whether or not non-residents should be allowed to purchase lots. The matter was eventually referred to the cemetery committee. It was just about this time also that the town voted to dig wells and install pumps in the east and west burying grounds.

According to the best information available Memorial Day was first proclaimed in 1868 by General John A. Logan, commander-in-chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, and was first observed in 1869.[1] There are several versions of his inspiration. One is that Capt. Asgill Connor organized the first decorating of graves in 1866 at Carbondale, Illinois, where General Logan was speaker of the day. Another is that Mrs. Mary Logan witnessed in 1867 the decorating of graves in Petersburg, Virginia, and described it to her husband. The originator of this ceremony was a school teacher, Miss Nora Davidson. A Union veteran also claimed to have written General Logan. In any event Acton early realized its obligation in this direction and on April 3, 1871 voted a sum not to exceed one hundred and fifty dollars "for hiring the Acton Brass Band to furnish music for Isaac Davis Post, G. A. R. No. 135, for the coming Decoration Day parade and for other expenses". Incidentally this is the first recorded mention of the Acton Band.

The same town meeting voted that "if the South Acton district, by a vote of the majority of the district, does not call upon the select-

[1] *World's Almanac*, 1951, p. 501.

men to build them a school house within seven days from date, the selectmen shall proceed to build one at the Centre." It was also voted that six thousand dollars plus the old houses and grounds be appropriated for the new school house in the Centre or the South as the case might be and Henry Smith, Moses Taylor, Samuel Hosmer, George W. Gates, Francis Dwight, and G. D. Fletcher were chosen as a building committee.

The South district did not avail itself of the opportunity and in consequence the year 1871-72 saw erected the impressive new school building at the Centre.[1] This is the same edifice at present in use. However far it may fall short of the modern ideal it was in its day a huge step forward in school architecture and the town had every reason to be proud of it.[2] The land was purchased from E. P. Bullard. Mr. Henry M. Smith, father of the late Charles E. Smith, was the supervisor of construction. The buildings in the other two villages were erected the following year. The Centre structure has the distinction that its whole basement is cut from the solid ledge. The pines that formerly stood as a windbreak to the west and rear were set out by Mr. Moses Taylor and his sons.

Present day Acton, under the impact of the influx of commuter population has out grown these buildings and has had to make do with various expedients during recent years until now the prospect of a whole new arrangement is in the offing Even so, however, these school houses far surpassed in that day and time what other towns of equal size were doing and they still stand as a monument to local interest in civic affairs.

Due to the fact that the teachers shifted rather rapidly it is difficult to trace the record but it appears reasonably certain that the following persons were the first to enjoy the privilege of working in the new buildings: Centre Grammar; Miss Allie Burnham, Mr. J. H. Butler, Mr. E. F. Richardson; Centre Primary, Miss Ina Austin, Miss Ada Davis; South Grammar, Miss Amelia Comstock; South Primary, Miss Charlotte Faulkner, Miss Ida Dadmun; West Grammar, Miss Ada Davis, Miss Abbie Allen; West Primary, Miss Anna Hall.

The year 1871 brought with it several events that were to have a great impact upon the future of the town. On April 19th Acton acquired a new neighbor with the incorporation of Maynard. The story is a familiar one in New England where frequently favorably located industrial sites engendered communities that rapidly out-

[1] An elderly resident made the statement a generation ago that the old schoolhouse that preceded the present one was moved and remodelled to make the dwelling next to Nagog Hill Road now occupied by Mr. Edward W. Mann.

[2] The building cost $6,950.00 and the land $225.00. The South and West buildings, put up shortly afterward under the direction of James Tuttle and George Wright respectively, cost $7,000.00 each.

grew the parent ones.

The general area now known as Maynard was in early colonial times designated as Elzabeth or Isabeath from the river, now called Assabet, which flowed through it. A notation dated May 22, 1651[1] states that, "Capt. Willard and Lt. Goodenow are appointed to lay out the thousand acres of land at Isabeath which Jethro the Indian mortgaged to Herman Garret". Jethro was one of Eliot's converts in 1650 and Daniel Gookin, the Indian agent, characterizes him as a grave and pious man. On a map of Sudbury dated 1795 the spelling is Elsabeth. The river had a tributary that was always called Assabet Brook. Six Indian skeletons, lying side by side, were once exhumed on the old Benjamin Smith place.[2]

In 1846 the little rug mill and the water privilege at the village of Assabet was purchased by Amory Maynard and William H. Knight, a carpet manufacturer of Saxonville. For sixteen years the mill continued to turn out rugs and carpets but in 1862, under the impetus of war demands and war prices, the firm reorganized as a corporation, the Assabet Manufacturing Company, and, as a producer of woolen fabrics, thrived like the proverbial bean-stalk and carried the village along with it. As Assabet enlarged apace the rural communities of Stow and Sudbury were in no position to supply the civic facilities of the offspring that had entirely outgrown them. It was almost a repetition of the story of Groton and Ayer and could have but one result. The new town of Maynard was created by taking thirteen hundred acres from Stow and nineteen hundred form Sudbury. Mr. Amory Maynard for whom the town was named died in March of 1890.

In May 1899 the mills and the business were purchased by the American Woolen Company. Immense new mills were built and Maynard became a modern, busy, industrial community, full of life and vitality but also subject to the ups and downs of the purchasing cycle of the nation. At times conditions have not been too happy in recent years but so far as Acton people are concerned Maynard is a popular shopping center.

Had Maynard not come into being it is unlikely that Acton ever would have passed through its tenuous, though pallid, electric car era.

Of the other events, two in particular can be discussed together, namely, the building of the prison as West Concord and the laying of the railroad tracks through the east and north parts of the town. No sooner had the Fitchburg Railroad been built than other interested parties began to agitate for service elsewhere. As early as 1845 a special town meeting instructed the selectmen to submit a petition

[1] *Colony Records,* vol. iii, p. 225.
[2] *History of Middlesex County,* vol. 2, p. 437.

to buttress one already presented by Francis Tuttle and others to charter a line through the east part of the town. The war years silenced the demand temporarily but once peace was established the movement took on new life. In September of 1870 there appeared in the warant of a special town meeting an article worded as follows:

> *"To see if the town will instruct the selectmen to take stock in the Lowell & Framingham Railroad to an amount not to exceed five percent of the valuation of the town provided it runs through South Acton and west of the cemetery near the Rocky Guzzle."*

This was obviously a resurgence of the idea of twenty five years previous and would have located the right-of-way along the picturesque glen that now lies between the cemetery proper and the mortuary chapel. Fortunately the article was dismissed. Two months later the town did vote to request the senator and the representative of the district[1] to vote in favor of a charter for a railroad from Dunstable to Concord.

The chief mover behind the project was Mr. Daniel J. Wetherbee who lived in the large brick house erected by his father in 1802 and now occupied by Henry K. Doyle. He was a man of integrity and vision and a leading citizen and hence was shrewd enough to realize that a rail line close to his grist and flour mill would give an impetus to his business and to the locality as well. His mill, built in 1840, stood until well after 1900, directly across the highway from the house and was served by a spur track branching off from the main line at the present grade crossing. The dam was essentially the one that stands today beside the residence of Mr. Stuart Allen and the water flowed to the mill by way of a long canal now filled in. The Wetherbee mill stood on the site of the ancient mill of Thomas Wheeler, Acton's first settler. The dam in those early days was only "two logs high" so the Wheeler mill, although a busy one, was perforce an unpretentious affair.

The locality had no name other than Wetherbee's Mills but with appearance of the railroad things began to happen. A contemporary newspaper article comments as follows:

> *"The pleasant village in the neighborhood of Acton Centre station has grown up within a period of five years. There are two causes for this sudden start, the projection, in this direction, of the Lowell and Framingham Railroad in* 1871 *and the Boston, Acton and Nashua shortly afterward, and the erection of the State Prison only half a mile away in Concord. These causes have resulted in the building of seventeen dwellings within the period just mentioned and*

[1] Mr. George W. Gates of Acton.

and we doubt not that there will be still greater growth in the future. Much credit is due to Daniel Wetherbee for what has been accomplished here, as he has had an important part in every step which has been taken for the promotion of the interests of the place.

The Nashoba Brook runs through this valley, and, as Nagog Pond, covering six hundred acres, is its reservoir it affords constant power. This is the best mill privilege in the town but it was utilized only slightly until Esquire Wetherbee erected his grist mill on it in 1840. *The present mill has done a large business ever since it was built and its enterprising proprietor has recently found it necessary to enlarge it.*

The only other use which is made of this ample power is by a saw mill which stands near the road leading to Acton Centre. The first saw mill to be built on this site was erected by Capt. Joseph Robbins about 1797. *Capt. Robbins was the first one to receive the alarm given on the morning of April* 19*th,* 1775. *The old house was destroyed by fire over twenty years ago. In those days the highway, instead of crossing above the dam as it does now, ran on the other side of the mill.*

In 1850 *the store was started by Daniel Wetherbee and J. E. Billings. It continued in their hands for four years until they sold it to George Frost. He owned it seven years and resold it to Daniel Wetherbee who sold it, after eleven years, to the present proprietor Mr. Isaac W. Flagg, who recently enlarged and improved it.*

The residence of Mr. Elbridge Robbins was built by John Robbins about 1800. *When built it was by far the best house in Acton and is excelled by very few even now.*

One thing which has promoted the growth of the village has been the reasonable price at which building lots have been sold. The lot upon which Capt. Luke J. Robbins erected his building was a free gift, and other good lots have not cost over fifty dollars. The principal impediment in the way of the growth of some of our villages is the high price at which building lots are held.[1]

The house in which J. R. Bassett lives was built by Daniel Wetherbee."

With the coming of the railroad the growing village aspired to,

[1] The Elbridge Robbins house mentioned above was one of the lottery houses and is now the residence of Mr. William Hinckley. The Luke J. Robbins house is at present occupied by Mr. Ronald McGarigle. Mrs. Amelia Robbins now lives in the Bassett house.

and obtained, a post office. The name Elmwood had been selected by the residents but as this was in conflict with an already existing village in the state the designation "Ellsworth" was accepted as a compromise. On March 3, 1873 Ellsworth post office began to function with Mr. I. W. Flagg as postmaster. For more than a dozen years the office kept its name but eventually, due to a confusion between the Ellsworths in both Maine and Massachusetts, it became East Acton on December 30, 1885. Two months previous Mr. James Billings had taken over the position of post master, which he continued to hold until succeeded by Mr. Charles J. Williams on September 7, 1900.

With the introduction of the automobile and long haul trucking the secondary railroad lines began to languish. Simultaneously the local farmers ceased to produce corn and grain in volume. A new era in food production was in process and with it the mill ceased to function with the result that on April 15, 1910 the East Acton post office became a thing of the past and the little village went into a temporary coma until rejuvinated by the modern trend of rural expansion.

The story of the railroads is briefly as follows.[1] The Lowell and Framingham ran under that name for two years and then became, strangely enough, the Framingham and Lowell. Subsequently it was run by the Boston, Clinton and Fitchburg, then by the Old Colony, and then by the New Haven.

The Nashua, Acton, and Boston ran from Nashua to Boston via the Reformatory. Within the confines of Acton the two tracks ran side by side and it was ever a mystery to youngsters how it could be that one track belonged to one railroad and the other to another. Until 1912 at least the old Reformatory station still functioned just across route 2 as a combination dwelling and station. It was not at that time possible to purchase a ticket direct from East Acton to Boston via Lexington and Arlington although freight was shunted about upon occasion. For passenger service the Reformatory station was the terminus of the line, particularly for the entering prisoners. Eventually the Nashua, Acton and Boston was taken over by the Boston and Maine, but not until it had been operated for a time by the Concord and Montreal.

Mr. Nahum Reed was station agent at East Acton from 1871 to 1898. He was followed by Thomas Evans and Carl Gurley who remained only briefly. Mr. Arthur Rayner, still resident in Acton in a home built many years ago just a stone's throw from the site of his long service, was agent from March 1908 until 1938 at which time the station was removed.

[1] Data supplied through the kindness of Mr. Arthur Rayner.

Mr. Charles I. Miller came to North Acton station in 1872 and remained until well after 1900. He was a native of Sudbury, Vt.. In 1870 he had the misfortune to lose one hand and a portion of the arm but was so adept at handling freight and express with the attached hook that he was ever a marvel to the youngsters of the town. His son Samuel grew up with railroading in his blood and retired in 1951 after having been successful as Assistant General Manager of the Boston and Maine and the Maine Central Railroad. Of the men who followed Mr. Charles Miller at North Acton the longest to remain was Mr. Elmer C. Cheney who built the house now owned by Mr. Swen Hagen and then was subsequently transferred to Lancaster. The station was closed in 1925.

Eventually the Boston and Maine tracks were removed and at present the one track remaining serves as an important cross country tie between Lowell and Concord. Military authorities assert that in the event service on the main line between Fitchburg and Boston were cut off in time of war this detour, single track though it is, would have a value far beyond its present apparent importance

Apparently the years of peace had induced a diminution in the interest in the militia. As an incentive the town, in November of 1872, voted to lease the armory portion of the town hall to the Davis Guards for three years on the same terms as formerly and also agreed to purchase swords and epulets for the commissioned officers provided the company would recruit the ranks to the regulation standards.

At about this same time a number of items appear on the record which, although unassociated, have a bearing on the progress of town affairs. The Fitchburg Railroad was requested to place crossing tenders at the main crossings at West and South Acton for the safety of the travelling public. The final report of the building committee for the three major school houses just erected was accepted and the committee was instructed to proceed with the necessary grading. In addition George Harris, Frederick Rouillard, and John White were constituted a committee to build a new school house at North Acton. This building was promptly erected and served the town for many years. It still stands in good condition on Harris Street as the residence of Mr. William Kendall. Two other projects, namely the installation of central heating in the Centre school house and the inauguration of a town high school, were broached at this time but the public mind was not yet receptive. Both innovations lay far in the future, even though Acton's population, by now more than 1600, was forcing the issue with the ruthlessness of a creeping glacier. The matter of public health was also ceasing to be an unimportant item beyond the communal interest. In 1872 a scourge of small pox swept the locality with devastating effect. Among the

pertinent data is found a notation stating that the town spent the sum of two hundred and forty nine dollars for the care and burial of the entire family of Horace Adams, nine persons in all, victims of the dread disease.

In this year also, on March 25th, died Mrs. Mehitable Piper, widow of Silas Piper, at the age of 101 years, 2 months and one day. So far as is known this is Acton's only centenarian. Her father was Joseph Barker, a member of Davis's company. He dwelt in a house long since burned that stood opposite the present residence of Mr. Dunn on Taylor Road. She was the last survivor of the membership of the old first church that worshipped as Puritans before religious differences were known.[1] At the turn of the century the "old Joe Barker place", under the care and ownership of Silas Taylor and subsequently his son Moses and his large family of sons, had become one of the busiest and most productive pieces of property in the town.

An interesting item in connection with national unemployment during this era appears in a notation of the overseers of the poor wherein it is recorded that in a single year one hundred and seventy five dollars was spent in feeding three hundred and fifty one "travellers". By 1875 the designation "traveller" had been supplanted by the less complimentary word "tramp".

In 1874 Acton's first newspaper made its appearance. It was an eight page tabloid measuring 13 x 20 inches with five columns to a page. At the top of the front page was an engraving of the Acton monument and the bold title ACTON PATRIOT. Under the word ACTON was the following quotation from remarks made by Governor John C. Andrew in 1861, "It is one of the hallowed omens of the war for the Union, that men of Concord, Lexington, and Acton are first in the field." On the right side under the word PATRIOT appeared the oft repeated words of Isaac Davis, "I haven't a man that is afraid to go." It was published weekly, at first on Saturday and subsequently on Thursday, at Dwight's Block in South Acton by a printing firm known as Johnson and Fletcher.[2] The mast head paragraph asserted it to be the only paper published within the ten towns of Acton, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Lincoln, Sudbury, Concord, Stow, Littleton, Boxborough and Westford, which had a combined population of fifteen thousand at the time. About half the space was devoted to advertising and a perusal of it convinces the reader that although human nature changes but little fundamentally there

[1] *Fletcher*, p. 257.

[2] Dwight's Block is now owned by Edward Bursaw. It has been made into a two tenement dwelling at present occupied by Donald Brazee and William Hughes. The old livery barn was torn down several years ago and replaced by a cement block garage.

have evolved certain methods of approach. This was the beginning of the heyday of the patent medicine and consequently the virtues of diverse liniments, salves, pain-killers, and cure-alls were proclaimed with abandon and profusion of rhetoric. The day of classified advertisements had not yet arrived and so we see Lowell, Hudson and Maynard competing with local talent in a hodge-podge of propaganda concerning merchants, shoemakers, dyers, blacksmiths, piano tuners, hack drivers, coffin builders, stud horses, private schools, roofers, bug killers, and church services. Nowadays it is regarded as poor taste for physicians and surgeons to advertise publicly in the press but in that more naive era a certain Dr. Bartlett of Lowell went into considerable detail concerning his remarkable success with tapeworms.

With such a thriving printing establishment in operation it was only natural that the town reports for 1874 should have been printed locally. Previously they had been done by Benjamin Tolman of Concord, or by Tolman and White of Boston, or by Marden and Rowell of Lowell. The Patriot town report is somewhat smaller then had been the custom. It was bound in pale blue and in general ran pretty much true to customary form.[1] The contract with the PATRIOT continued until 1884. Thereafter until 1889 the name of the Acton Enterprise Steam Job Printing Company appears on the cover and subsequently the Enterprise Company of Hudson did the work.

In 1874 the district comprised of Acton, Wayland, and Sudbury was represented in the state legislature by Mr. George C. Wright of West Acton. Since the district never has elected a Democrat, Mr. Wright was, like all the others, a staunch Republican. A short biography and a picture appear in Fletcher,[2] but it may be desirable to mention here that he was a partner for many years with Dwinnell, Hayward & Co., of Boston, the largest coffee and spice house in New England. In 1846 he married Susan Davis of Acton, grand niece of Capt. Isaac Davis. He was a man of high principles, possessed a strong sense of civic duty, and was for many years one of the town's prominent citizens. He was a prime mover in the Universalist activity in West Acton and contributed largely toward the erection of the church of that denomination.

Early in January of 1875 the wheels were set in motion by the town of Concord for the greatest celebration Middlesex County ever experienced. In connection with the centennial of Concord Fight

[1] One item listing receipts of $62.25 for the use of the town hall cellar needs explanation to the modern reader. It was customary for several decades to auction off space in the cellar for storage. Thousands of barrels of apples were stored therein before the days of modern refrigeration.

[2] Fletcher, page 4 of biographical section.

but because of the unique part that Acton men had played in the engagement at Concord Bridge a special letter of invitation was addressed to the selectmen by the committee of arrangements. This letter, which is pasted into the town records, is herewith given. It is a gracious and courteous document that should not become unknown through neglect.

Concord, January 9, 1875

To the Selectmen of Acton,

Gentlemen,

The Committee of Arrangement for the Centennial Celebration of "Concord Fight" chosen by the town of Concord desire the cooperation of the Town of Acton in the approaching celebration — April 19th, 1875.

Formal invitations have been sent to all the towns whose men participated in the first armed struggle for liberty to to join with Concord in the proper celebration of the day, and you have undoubetedly received yours.

But it seems to this committee, and it is the desire of the town of Concord, that the town of Acton should receive something more than a formal invitation. Davis and Hosmer, — men of Acton — were the first martyrs to organized resistance to the British Crown, and on the spot where they fell, it is proposed to erect an emblematical statue of a minute man and to dedicate it with appropriate ceremonies At its dedication the citizens of Acton should have a prominent part. As Acton joined with Concord in that famous fight, — as Acton joined with Concord in 1825, *and again in* 1850, *in celebrating their common anniversary, — as Concord joined with Acton at the dedication of your monument in* 1851, *so now we hope Acton will join with Concord, and make a commemoration that shall of itself be memorable.*

We trust thereforè that you, or some committee on the part of your town, will confer with us, as soon as practicable, with reference to the arrangements for the forthcoming celebration.

We are gentlemen
very respectfully
Your obedient servants
George Keyes
Richard Barrett
Samuel Hoar
Charles H. Walcott
Jas. E. Melvin

for Concord Committee of Arrangements.

The town of Lexington also planned a simultaneous celebration and since Acton received invitations to participate in both it was decided in town meeting to solve the dilemma by passing a resolution to the effect that the town would be delighted to accomodate both towns but since it was in Concord that the men of Acton distinguished themselves and that since also a monument was to be dedicated at Concord in their honor it was deemed proper to accept the invitation of Concord.

A committee of ten men was chosen to act in conjunction with the Concord committee[1] and another committee of three, consisting of Luther Conant, Charles A. Harrington and John Fletcher, was selected to represent the town at the ceremonies in Lexington.

In view of the elaborate plans being envisioned at Concord it was decided that Acton would attempt no formal celebration but would restrict its observance to the usual ringing of bells, firing salutes, and the decoration of the monument somewhat after the fashion chosen at its dedication in 1851, followed by a mass meeting and band concert in the town hall in the evening At a subsequent town meeting it was voted to expend a sum not to exceed $1100.00 to outfit a company of minute men to represent Acton in the forthcoming celebration at Concord This company, under the command of Capt. Aaron C. Handley and lieutenants Frank Whitcomb, Daniel Farrar and John Loker eventually appeared in parade eighty three strong.

The morning of April 19, 1875 was the exact contrary of the counterpart of the century before. Instead of a balmy spring morning the temperature was in the low twenties, ice covered all the ponds, and the wind pierced the stoutest clothing. Nevertheless a crowd of nearly a hundred thousand precipitated itself upon the town of Concord.[2] Over ten thousand jammed the North Station at Boston before nine o'clock. In Lowell the ticket clerks gave up in despair and closed the windows at ten o'clock to the consternation of hundreds unable to secure passage at any predictable hour for the remainder of the day.

Precisely at sunrise (5.18) Concord was awakened by a salvo of one hundred heavy guns which continued to fire until the most somnolent were thoroughly aroused.

The huge parade, headed by the United States Marine Band and assisted by the first regiment band and fifteen others was made up of five long sections. In the line were two hundred members of the

[1] Luther Conant, James Billings, Rev. Franklin P. Wood, Olier W. Mead, Hiram Hapgood, Col. Winthrop E. Faulkner, Daniel Wetherbee, Frank Whitcomb, George R. Keyes, George Wright.

[2] *The Boston Weekly Journal* of April 22, 1875 devoted a special issue of four complete pages to the events at Concord and Lexington with the detailed make-up of each division of the parade.

Massachusetts Legislature, the president and many of the faculty of Harvard College, Governor Peck of Vermont with the St. Albans brass band and an escort of one hundred and sixty two men, Governor Dingley of Maine, Governor Chamberlain of South Carolina, together with numerous other governors and New England mayors galore. On the national level there were such dignitaries as President Grant, Vice-President Henry Wilson, Secretary of State Hamilton Fish, Secretary of the Interior Columbus Delano, Secretary of War William Belknapp, Speaker of the House James G. Blaine, and ex-President Franklin Pierce.[1]

In this concourse Acton was represented by its selectmen and thirty other citizens, a brass band of twenty eight pieces, and its company of eighty three minute men. Also in line was the grandson of Isaac Davis, Amos N. Fitch of Cattaraugus, N. Y., aged seventy one, and his sister, Mrs. Simon Davis of Acton, aged seventy eight. Also among Acton's minute men was Amos Lucien Noyes, great-grandson of Isaac Davis.

One of the outstanding ceremonies of the day was the unveiling of the Minute Man statue at the Old North Bridge. The sculptor, Daniel Chester French, was then a young man of only twenty five but his masterpieces of later years secured him no greater renown and gave him no greater personal satisfaction.

At the afternoon exercises there was a speech by Ralph Waldo Emerson, a poem by James Russell Lowell, and a long oration by Mr. George William Curtis, formerly of Concord. In introducing Mr. Curtis the chairman of the day, Mr. E. Rockwell Hoar, exhibited the sword of Isaac Davis and observed that although about a foot was broken off the end, necessitating one more step forward, he would willingly have taken that step.

Rev. Franklin P. Wood, pastor of the Centre Congregational Church from 1871 to 1884, responded at the proper time on behalf of Acton. He covered the customary details concerning the part played by Davis in the events at Concord Fight and concluded his remarks by reading the deposition of Hannah Davis bearing on the events of the day.[2]

Apparently our forbears were real men particularly when it came to taking celebrations in their stride, for it appears that after having put in a full day at the greatest parade and ceremonials ever seen in the countryside the Acton citizens returned to attend en masse the previously planned observations in the town hall. The present generation can still learn something of endurance from the town fathers of old.

Just when the name Woodlawn was chosen for the cemetery at the

[1] President Grant visited Acton upon this occasion, thus making three presidents, he and the two Adames, who have trod Acton Common.

[2] See Appendix XII.

Centre is unknown. There is no mention of town action on the matter and in all probability the choice was made by the cemetery committee. The first actual mention of the name appears in an article in the warrant for a town meeting to be held on November 2, 1875 wherein it is desired to see what action the town will take to build a new face wall at Woodlawn cemetery in the east part of town. This doubtless refers to the wall now extending from the west gate around the turn to the tomb.

In April following several innovations were made in the whole regulation of the cemeteries that indicated a healthy and growing civic consciousness. The cemetery committee was instructed to price all lots, said price to be from one to five dollars for inhabitants and four times as much for non-residents. Deeds were to be issued, accurate records kept and legal action invoked for defacement.

In this connection it may be mentioned that until this time two fences had surrounded the monument on the common. During the year 1876 the inside fence was removed. The outer fence, a ponderous affair of granite posts and heavy, sagging chains, was to surround the terraces and the slate stones for another score of years.

It was customary at this period for the school committee to include detailed information in the annual report regarding the ability and success of the several teachers in the town. When the facts were adverse nothing was held back, as per the following from the report of 1877.

> *"The winter term was managed (?) by Rev. S. O. Dyer. This teacher had charge of a small school in this town in* 1875. *In our report of the school he then taught we said, "The school made a fair degree of progress under his management. He did not awaken enthusiasm and arouse ambition of the scholars to the degree we could have desired". Mr. D. had not taught for several years when he took charge of the other school, but he professed to have received special preparation for the work of teaching, and, as since he has taught several terms in a neighboring town, and has been assistant superintendent of the schools in another town, we judged it safe to commit this school to his charge, but we are sorry to be obliged to report that the school was very far from being a success."*

Since the town report went into the hands of every voter the shortcomings of Mr. Dyer were by no means a secret. Although social manners have deteriorated in the last seventy five years no public official would today publish such a devastating assertion. At that time, however, the school committee took its duty seriously and made clear to the electorate what was going on and why.

A casual glance at a copy of the Acton Patriot for October 12, 1876 gives one several sidelights on town affairs. The Fitchburg Railroad time table shows seven trains a day for Boston, five for Fitchburg, and four for Marlborough. The Framingham and Lowell line ran three trains a day. According to the church notices it appears that there were services at ten thirty and one thirty and that the Sunday Schools convened in between. One interesting item states that persons desirous of settling in the territory of Nebraska may have free transportation thereto over the Union Pacific Railway.

Throughout Acton's history Lake Nagog has been the Mecca of the local anglers. Fed solely by powerful springs, some of which are fifty feet below the surface, its waters are remarkably clear and the shore line is almost entirely free from the swamp plants that customarily appear during the life history of the normal lake with silt bearing tributaries. The dam at the outlet, built about a century ago to impound additional water for the mills some two miles away, raised the water level appreciably and produced the large island, lying wholly within the town of Littleton, together with the shallow reaches of marsh, water lillies and pickerel weed round about it. The diversity of character in the water made the ichthyic life varied and abundant, including trout, pickerel, bass, perch, and even eels and horned pout. Some amazing tales persist concerning the old timers of a hundred years ago. One asserts that a single fisherman in a single day caught one hundred and sixty seven pickerel and amassed a grand total of three thousand in a lifetime.[1] One cannot refrain from wondering what other occupation this disciple of Isaac Walton pursued.

In 1878 the town expended one hundred and thirty six dollars for bass stock and similar sums at subsequent times. In this particular entry the lake is designated as Magog. This variation in the spelling deserves some comment since the same form appears now and then in the ancient records. It is possible that both forms have justification. In either case the word is undoubtedly Indian and has no connection with the Biblical Magog the son of Japheth.[2]

The Indian word for water is rendered in English as "magog" in several instances, prominent among which is Lake Memphremagog which lies athwart the Canadian line and upon which is located the town of Newport, seat of Orleans County, Vermont. In that locality the word "memphremagog" has long been understood to mean

[1] *Fletcher*, p. 282.

[2] Genesis 10:2; Ezekiel 38:2.

"beautiful waters"[1]

If one chooses to give the imagination free play it is not difficult to visualize a pair of early colonial explorers being guided by an Indian, a Nashoba doubtless, for the first time to the shore of our own beautiful lake. By some means they make the Indian aware of their desire to know what he calls it. The guide, amazed at the stupidity of these enigmatic white strangers who can stand within a few steps of several hundred acres of water and ask such a question, is confounded. Possibly he gives forth an ejaculation signifying "water" but which to the listeners is most nearly duplicated by the words "magog" or "nagog".[2] It may have persisted in both forms for several generations but certainly the latter spelling has held sway for the last three quarters of a century.

The dam at Nagog appears to date from about 1852. It is known that the White family pastured cattle at that locality in the decade ending with 1850 and that Daniel Wetherbee bought the water rights in 1852 at the time he enlarged his mill at East Acton.[3]

Although the origins of baseball go back to Colonel Abner Doubleday in 1839 the game did not approximate its modern form until 1859 when a team was formed in Washington, D. C. The next year the city of Lowell, Mass. put a team in the field which of necessity inspired in the local boys an avid interest. In 1871 the National Association was formed with teams in nine cities well distributed over the country.[4] Although the organization was pathetically loose according to modern standards, and even though many of the games did not come off as scheduled, baseball had come to stay and Acton was in the vanguard among the small towns with a team in 1877.

As yet no standard uniform had been evolved, even for city teams, but a photograph formerly in the possession of James B. Tuttle showed the Acton team as wearing a white cap with a blue A on the front. In addition each man was resplendent in a white wool shirt of heavy texture with a shield outlined in navy blue braid covering the whole chest area. In the center of the shield, which was fastened by about a dozen cloth covered buttons, there was an old English A also in navy blue. The pants and shoes were ad libitum but for that

[1] The author is indebted to G. C. Bartlett of Newport, Vt. for the following data; history of Orleans County published about 1875 states that the Indians called the lake Memphremagog, meaning "beautiful waters" and tradition has accepted that meaning. Some years ago a book was published entitled "Beautiful Waters" concerning the lake and its surroundings.

[2] The first reference to this body of water by name appears along about the middle of the agreement between the town of Concord and Thomas Wheeler, drawn in 1669. It is there called "nagog pond". See Appendix I.

[3] Mr. Horace Tuttle cites a record of conveyance from Whipple, Tileson & Hale to Daniel Wetherbee dated 1852.

[4] Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, Brooklyn, Cleveland, Rockford, Ill., Troy, N. Y., Fort Wayne, Ind., and a New York City team named the Mutuals.

day and time the Acton ball club was a sartorial triumph.

According to our venerable raconteur the old timers were men of valor and ability. In that distant day the called strike was unknown and the batter could demand that the ball be thrown where he preferred it. In consequence strike outs were rare, singles almost too insignificant for the record and home runs commonplace. Ground rules were as yet far in the future and upon one occasion Acton won a game when the ball, jamming tightly between the pickets of a fence in the outfield, resisted all efforts to dislodge it until the bases had been cleared. There were no carefully tended playing fields. Any reasonably clear pasture was acceptable. The best one in the local area was near Fletcher Corner and there mighty combats were staged and prodigies performed that still titillate the memories of the few remaining nonogenarians.

By a stroke of good fortune the list of Acton's first knights of the diamond is still vivid in the mind of Mr. Hoar. We give it herewith for the amusement and information of the interested.

James B. Tuttle, pitcher; Frank Marshall, catcher; George Reed, first base[1]; Edward F. Conant, second base; Charles Day, third base; Arthur Tuttle, short-stop[2]; Simon Taylor, left field[3]; John Hoar, center field; William Puffer, right field; Lyman Taylor, utility substitute[4]; Dennis Sullivan, catcher and utility.[5]

In March of 1880 public sentiment began to crystalize with respect to the possibility of a town library. This was a natural reaction to the whole movement that spread westward from New England through New York and Ohio and led to the term "library belt" for that area where facile access to printed information was considered desirable for the general population. A committee consisting of Rev. I. C. Knowlton, J. K. W. Wetherbee, Daniel Fletcher, Elbridge Robbins, Jona W. Parker, and William D. Tuttle was chosen to investigate and report a month later. The article was subsequently dismissed but the seed that was to bear fruit a decade later had been sown.

A more immediate reaction, however, was a movement instigated by a group in West Acton to form an organization known as the Citizens' Library that has functioned until the present.

On October 6th, 1883 about forty gentlemen met in the railroad depot to discuss the matter. Mr. F. C. Nash called the meeting to order. Rev. I. C. Knowlton was chosen temporary chairman and Charles B. Stone temporary secretary. Permanent officers were elected as follows: Luke Blanchard, President; Bradley Stone, James

[1] Father of George Howard Reed.
[2] Brother of James B. Tuttle.
[3] [4] Brothers of Emery Taylor.
[5] A ringer from Townsend.

Brown, Adelbert Mead, Charles Taylor, Vice-Presidents; Charles B. Stone, Secretary; Thomas O'Brien, station agent, Asst. Secretary; Edwin Stone, Treasurer and Collector; Clara Nash, Librarian; F. C. Nash, George Gardner, F. H. Whitcomb, Executive Committee.

There was in the village a Farmers' Club that was functioning at this time more or less sporadically. Consequently it was voted at this meeting that the Executive committee confer with its representatives concerning the library in its custody. Although the records do not make further mention of the matter assurance is given by Mr. John Hoar that the Farmers' Club library came into the eventual possession of the Citizens' Library.

There were sixty eight subscribers to the original library fund with subscriptions ranging from one dollar to fifty dollars.

On November 8, 1883 the library was opened in a room adjoining Grand Army Hall, over what was at that time the post office but in more recent years the Town Shop, with Mrs. Clara Nash as librarian. The act of incorporation was consummated October 2, 1884. In 1892, at the suggestion of Mrs. Nash, a cheaper and more satisfactory location was obtained in the Universalist Church.

In 1894 Mr. Phineas Wetherbee, one of the corporators and prime movers in organizing the library, died, and bequeathed his home on Windsor Ave. together with certain other parcels of land, to the library corporation. The corporation was obliged to sue the estate to obtain title. The details need not be given here but the suit was apparently successful since it was voted on April 18, 1900 "that the library be removed to the north side of Phineas Wetherbee's house after necessary changes are made". All the land was sold except the lot on which the house now stands. The lot on which the fire house now stands was sold to the town. All the money from the land sales was deposited in the savings banks. The property is still owned by the corporation.

With the inauguration of periodic auditing of town accounts by the state the requisite bookkeeping and general management became more demanding and finally eventuated in public action in town meeting. The West Acton Citizens' Library continues to serve the West village as a corporation with its own staff of officers. The town hires and controls its librarian who distributes the books from the Wilde Memorial Library as a branch as well as its own books owned by the Citizens' Library.

The librarian in recent years until her resignation in 1950 was Miss Katherine Kinsley. Mrs. Edith A. Hopkinson took over the duties in 1951.

Apparently Acton had several blizzards and an unusually heavy snowfall during the winter of 1880-81 quite out of line with the eastern

portion of the state in general.[1] Its effect is reflected in the report of the school committee wherein it is mentioned specifically that the heavy snows caused a decided abbreviation in the attendance. The suggestion is made for the first time that in the future it ought to be understood that when the roads were badly drifted there should be no school session. The modern reader must pause to realize that this was long before the era of the present day bulldozer and other snow handling machinery. "Breaking out the roads" meant that the various road men got out several two horse wood sleds with an ordinary field plow chained to each side at the rear to throw the snow a bit. A corps of shovelers rode on each sled and if the going was tough four horses might well be hitched on. When a deep drift was encountered, such that the horses might readily calk themselves in struggling through, the shovelers turned to and cut through it, sometimes in a few minutes, sometimes in two or three hours. The sidewalks in the villages were ploughed out after a fashion by a horse drawn V shaped snowplow made of plank and shod with iron. It was about ten feet long, twenty inches high, and four feet across at the wide end, and had a floor upon which the driver stood if the snow was not too deep. Extra heavy drifts were circumnavigated and hence the pedestrian might find himself in the ditch or on some one's front lawn but it made small difference since the ground was usually iron hard in any event.

Whatever pranks the weather may have played the town had on its mind matters of far greater import. We refer here to the great "bounty fight" which for intensity and sustained animosity far outstripped any other political row in the town annals. There had been long argument over the location of the two meeting houses but they were not only anemic as compared with the present controversey but were completely different in character. The voters split in the former two cases as to the site of a building. The bounty question, however, involved personal avarice, public morality, and communal integrity.

The essence of the trouble lay in the fact that certain soldiers who were promised a bounty of a hundred and twenty five dollars for enlisting in the latter part of the war had not received it. This was partly because there was misunderstanding as to the portion, if any, to be paid by the state. In all probability the town would have voted without demur immediately after the war to pay the required sums and have gambled on getting eventual reimbursement from the Commonwealth. This had not been done, however, and hence the matter had dragged along in semi-abeyance for fifteen years.

[1] Not to be confused with the great blizzard of March 11-14, 1888, by which all others are judged.

Finally at a town meeting on April 4, 1881 the special committee, consisting of Varnum Mead, James Billings, and Daniel Wetherbee, that had been in charge of the bounty payments in 1864, made its routine report of expenditures. The sum involved was $4477.67 and concerned the enlistment of twenty two men. Immediately there was lively debate which ended in the passage of a vote to spend not in excess of two hundred dollars for legal fees to investigate the validity of the bill. This was clearly indicative of the temper of the citizenry on the whole issue. Some were opposed to bounties in any form at any time; others were against taxes of any form under any circumstances; certain of the soldiers who had enlisted early in the war, as well as their relatives felt abused that after fifteen years they should be expected to assist in doles to men who never fired a gun. Before the meeting adjourned, however, the friction abated and it was voted to pay the bill.

Nevertheless not all was harmony. By November another meeting was convened at which by a vote of 109 to 81 it was decided to pay those veterans who enlisted in the 26th Massachusetts and were credited to Acton one hundred and twenty five dollars. It was also voted to appoint a committee to go before the legislature and procure if possible the passage of a bill legalizing the levying of such a tax.

The considerable negative vote indicates the pitch to which interest had been aroused. The bounty question had become political dynamite. As a result there was an article in the warrant for the March meeting of 1882 desiring the appointment of an auditing committee to see why $4477 was spent for recruiting twenty two men as shown by the reports of 1864 and 1865. The opposition was out for blood and was combing the records for any ammunition, either recent or otherwise, to embarrass the proponents of the bounty. When the meeting convened it was agreed after protracted debate to permit Mr. James Billings to speak at length upon the matter. At the conclusion of his remarks the meeting voted not to appoint an auditing committee.

The details of Mr. Billings' speech are not officially recorded but their gist is preserved in a badly mutilated newspaper article by Mr. Daniel Wetherbee, apparently printed during the ensuing week, in answer to two previous communications sent to the paper by private citizens. Mr. Wetherbee makes the observation that these letters impugn the honesty of the committee in carrying out its duties in 1864-65 and hence his personal integrity. A short quotation from the article will explain his position with a minimum of verbosity.

"*Sometime in the last of November*, 1864, *it was thought by quite a number of citizens that Acton ought immediately*

to add more men to her quota, as the prospect seemed to be that the price of recruits in the near future would be much higher than it then was. That there might be the least possible delay quite a number of citizens assembled at the town hall one evening at about the above mentioned date and put their names to a paper guaranteeing to the recruiting committee, James E. Billings, Varnum Mead, and myself, what we should think it best to pay out in the enlistment of not more than fifty men to the credit of Acton.

Supported by this paper, which we still have, we went on without waiting for a town meeting and enlisted quite a large number of men and had them placed to our credit.

That we might make no mistake in the matter and pay for men not mustered into service or placed to our credit we went to the Adjutant General's office and received instructions as to whom we could transact our business with so as to be perfectly safe, and we acted strictly by those instructions. Mr Billings drew and paid out all the money and never paid out a cent excepting upon properly attested certificates.

After the close of the war Mr. Billings handed in to the town clerk the names of these men as they appeared upon the certificates, and those names were read at the town meeting Monday.

If the proper number of names does not appear on the Adjutant General's books at the state house we cannot help it. We claim that we used due care in the premises and upon that claim, in view of all the presumption in our favor, we are willing to rest our case."

Following this, but too badly mutilated to be trusted as a record, there appears in fine print some three inches of names of those who signed the paper mentioned by Mr. Wetherbee. The names of John Fletcher, who drew up the document, Luke Tuttle, James E. Billings, J. K. W. Wetherbee, John Conant, Luther Forbush, Ai Robbins, Luke J. Robbins, George Colman, Stevens Hayward, and Cyrus Hosmer are readily decipherable and give a clear idea of the type of men who stood behind the committee.

One would think that the controversy would have ended here, particularly since the town agreed to pay the bill. As a matter of fact, however, the whole affair was just about to explode in a quite new direction which was to obscure in great part the original issues. This may well be called phase two since there is yet another to follow. Some of the minority party began to really concentrate upon the matter and anyone familiar with New England rural politics knows

that every community contains a coterie of inimitable characters who, although they may sit and whittle and appear to do nothing of importance, can, particularly under pecuniary incentive, shuck out an idea of sufficient adroitness to confound an international chess champion. Shortly it began to be bruited about that if the town were so affluent that it could toss off several thousand dollars to short term soldiers in the latter part of the war then the wives and heirs of these same soldiers, either killed in action or deceased in the interim, also had a claim on the bounty these men would have received had they lived until 1882.

Needless to say, the controversey which had up to this time been warm, was now red hot. Any semblance of decorum that formerly existed vanished precipitately. The local stores were hot beds of discussion. Forthright terms of abuse were freely exchanged with accompanying fisticuffs as tempers escaped control. Approximately half the adult population ceased to be on speaking terms with the remainder. Numerous citizens who had thought well of themselves for years suddenly discovered exactly where they stood in the estimation of their neighbors.

Many who were heartily in favor of the soldier bounty felt outraged that persons who had in no wise risked themselves and were not even dependents of men who had done so were to be the beneficiaries of taxes levied in part upon veterans in frugal circumstances or even in some cases maimed or ill. In particular were the relatives and friends of the actual gunpowder soldiers who, because they enlisted early in the conflict, were not eligible for the bounty, resolved to tear the town apart before they gave in. In general they were backed by the patriotic citizens who felt ashamed of the whole sordid business. There was justification in this attitude since the matter had gone far beyond the confines of Acton. A letter in the public press from a writer in Fall River was not a thing to induce pride.[1]

Before long the contest, while for the common folk it remained one of principle, became for the more influential citizens a battle to see who was to "run the town". All sorts of pressures were brought to bear, jobs were threatened, business agreements cancelled, and churches split into schisms. That actual cash changed hands between town meetings is certain but not now provable. According to one witness a young man, not a native of Acton, whose birthday fell one day too soon, was forced to perjure himself as to his age and vote anyway. In a fit of resentment he cast his ballot contrary to the parental wishes, thoroughly whipped his father in the resulting brawl, and left Acton for good. Seasonal workers whose sojourn in Acton was

[1] James Brady, Collector of Customs, Fall River.

not to exceed a few months were induced by devious means to claim residence in order to vote.

With the public mind in this posture the town meeting of April 3, 1882 was without precedent. The glowering partisans congregated on either side of the center aisle. The voting desk was set up at the front of the hall and before the balloting it was agreed that all the area around it was to be kept cleared. Acton had at this time a population of 1797 but even so, with only males exercising the sufferage, over four hundred and thirty ballots were cast. The lame, the halt, the blind, the simple minded were all there. Even those moderately ill were in some cases carried to the ballot box.

The specific question at issue was

> *"To see if the town, voting by ballot, will pay a bounty of one hundred and twenty-five dollars to each soldier and the legal representative of each deceased soldier who re-enlisted as a veteran in the 26th Massachusetts Volunteers under the call of the President October* 17, 1863 *who was credited to the town and never has received any bounty therefrom for such re-enlistment, and raise by taxation the sum of four thousand dollars for, and appropriate the same to, the payment of said bounties".*

When the ballots were counted it was found that the article had prevailed temporarily at least, by a vote of 219 to 215.

It certainly appeared that the bounty was assured but with the electorate so evenly divided anyone conversant with local politics would suspect that merely one more round was finished. Quite apart from exalted questions of ethics there were plenty on the losing side who could view the matter from the money angle too. The frugal farmer, possibly a veteran of heavy campaigning, who saw only five or six hundred dollars a year in cash was in no mood to contribute to his wealthier neighbor — he would just town meeting the whole issue to exhaustion. There would be no dearth of signers for a meeting to reconsider.

In this state of mind the voters assembled in special meeting on August 21st and a motion to reconsider failed by 204 to 194 whereupon the meeting was adjourned sine die. Twelve days later the session reconvened and again the motion to rescind failed by 206 to 198. As the losers sat in grim silence and the victors cheered in jubilation one of those inexplicable quirks of circumstance that on rare occasions transpire to relieve the tenseness of a situation took place. In the center of the main aisle there was a large register about four feet in diameter. One voter on the winning side, cavorting in the excess of his glee, broke through and all but disappeared into the hot air duct. The whole assemblage, regardless of sides, burst

into hilarity while the victim, according to one of his rescuers still living, expressed himself vehemently and volubly in no uncertain terms.[1]

It would be gratifying if it could be said that the whole controversey ended on this humorous note as every one went home with a chuckle. The dismal facts are, however, that phase three was about to begin; the most fantastic political episode in Acton's history. Since it appeared that the paying of the bounty was assured a small group of men began to scrutinize the wording of the original article and with avidity pounced upon the term "legal representative". These were men who had possessed sufficient means to hire substitutes, who, in several instances, had perished in the conflict or had died previous to 1882. Hence these patriotic gentry claimed a right to the bounty and even went so far in one or two cases as to assert the right to a pension.

It requires but slight imagination to see that if the fight had been hot before it now became incandescent. Convinced that the public temper would contenance no such machinations the group took out an injunction against the town to prevent the payment of the bounty to anyone. Due to local influence they had some following but in general there was a considerable relignment of sentiment. Many persons formerly against the bounty on principle reversed themselves. They were in no state of mind to pay as much as a hundred and twenty five cents, to say nothing of dollars, to men who counted their income in thousands.

As a result of the injunction a town meeting was held on November 7, 1882. The debate was short and to the point. The town voted to defend itself and chose Luther Conant and Daniel Wetherbee as a committee to conduct the defense before the supreme court with authority to engage counsel. The injunction was removed whereupon it became necessary to see that the legislature pass the act enabling the town to assess the requisite taxes. Here the minority made their last stand. As has been pointed out earlier the original issues had been long since submerged in the death struggle to see who was to dominate the town politics. The group had sufficient influence so that the Governor vetoed the bill. When it came to a vote on the morning of the very last day of the session there were not sufficient votes to overide the veto. Certain Acton citizens who were on hand to watch proceedings immediately hurried home to spread the news and stage a noisy celebration.

[1] Insult was added to injury when there appeared in the town warrant for the March meeting of 1883 an article seeking to make the victim pay for the register. The record does not make clear the final disposition of the matter, but an Acton citizen now living states that it never was enforced.

For the sake of clarity the portion of the bill before the legislature that was in actual controversey and for which the injunction had been sought is given herewith.

> *"The town of Acton is authorized in the manner provided in section two of this act, to raise by taxation a sum of money not to exceed* $4000.00 *and appropriate the same to the payment of a bounty of* $125.00 *to each soldier and legal representative of each deceased soldier, who re-enlisted as a veteran in the 26th regiment of Massachusetts under the call of the president dated October* 17, 1863, *who was credited to said town and has never received therefrom any bounty for such re-enlistment; provided that said town shall not be reimbursed by the Commonwealth for any money paid under the authority of this act."*

Section two mentioned above had to do with the method of presenting the matter to the voters and stipulated that the question should appear in a town warrant and that the vote should be by ballot on a YES and NO proposition. Furthermore the act was to take effect immediately upon its passage.

Mr. Luther Conant and Mr. Wetherbee, however, were on the spot and interceded with influential members of the Senate, telling them the real inwardness of the matter. In consequence the Senate reconsidered in the afternoon and as of March 20, 1882 the enabling act was passed over the governor's veto and became law since the lower house corroborated the decision without delay.

Then the shoe was decidedly on the other foot. Mr. John Hoar recalls how gleefully Mr. Delette Hall jumped off the evening train with both hands full of copies of the bill.

Thus ended the great bounty fight beside which all other Acton rows seem rather tame. The payments were made with reasonable promptness with one exception. For reasons not now discoverable George Pike had a petition in the warrant in three different years seeking his bounty. An affirmative vote finally came in 1891 but the delay remains a mystery.

In spite of the raging of the bounty fight the town did not expend its total energy in that direction It even found time to consider in a positive but rather ineffectual way what to do about fire protection. It voted to provide pails, ladders and fire hooks for each of the five villages and make arrangements for housing the same. In addition the town offered to meet half the expense for the purchase of hand force pumps, at five dollars each, for as many citizens as desired to avail themselves of the opportunity. Some of these pumps were still in existence as relics within the memory of the author. They were metal affairs with a wooden plunger. If set in a pail or a tub of

water they would throw a stream perhaps half an inch in diameter several yards. For an incipient fire that had built up no heat they were better than nothing but that is all that can be said for them.

At the April meeting of 1883 the high school question again arose and to the gratification of many the decision was made to raise eight hundred dollars for the purpose. The school was to be in session for three terms of three months each. The first term of the year was to be in the spring at West Acton, the second term to be at the Centre in the autumn, and the third term as South Acton in the winter.[1] Pursuant of this vote the summer was a busy one for the school authorities. Superintendant Frederick C. Nash makes the following comment in his annual report:[2]

> "*Established so unexpectedly, and not until several scholars had made arrangements to attend elsewhere, it did not immediately and wholly arrest that exodous to the schools of other towns which had done so much to weaken our schools, and it became necessary to admit scholars who had not regularly completed the grammar school course. But at the next term older scholars came in and during the year the school has numbered about forty eight different scholars.*"

He goes on to make clear that the committee and the superintendent must fix the standards for admittance to the high school, hold public written examinations for the candidates, and firmly adhere to the standards set. He outlines the prospective course of study as embracing Book-keeping, Algebra, Geometry, Ancient and Modern History, English Literature, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, the Constitution and Government of the United States, together with French and Latin. These latter two, however, were not to be required for graduation but a special clause was to be inserted in the diplomas of those who took them. In short he recommended that the English course be required and that other languages be optional.

In view of the present mass influx into the colleges some interest attaches to Mr. Nash's further assertion that while he does not belittle the value of a college preparatory course the time is not ripe for it since "not one per cent of the people of Acton ever have or ever will go through college".

He must have been a man of wisdom as well as intelligence since he makes the point that the location of the high school is not of importance at that early stage but that if necessary a small sum can be

[1] A recent newspaper article makes the erroneous assertion that the moving high school was on wheels. As mentioned above the school rotated term by term but the classes were held in the present buildings which, as has been previously pointed out, were erected some eleven years previous to the inception of the high school.

[2] Town report for February 26, 1884, p. 29.

appropriated for transportation until such time as a separate building is necessary.

Thus the first Acton high school began its career in the autumn of 1883 under the guidance of Mr. H. H. Williams as principal. His salary was eighty dollars a month and the school rotated term by term among the villages as had previously been voted.

By sheer good fortune it happens that there is in existence a complete list of the scholars attending this first session. Not only that but there is also a priceless record of their deportment based on the scale of 100 as denoting perfection.[1] Among the group there are five who were entirely satisfactory, namely, Annie Lee, Ora Clough, William Kelley, David Kinsley, and Herbert Robbins. Due to the fact that certain younger scholars were at first admitted it is not surprising that they found the high school atmosphere a bit irksome. It is significant of the times that the ages vary from William Kelley[2] who was twenty to Lutie Conant who was a youngster of eleven.[3]

This roll is so unique and interesting that it is herewith given in full.

Della Barker	95	Sarah Hammond	98
Jennie Bean	95	Millie Handley	94
Susie Billings	99	Minnie Harris	99
Joseph Bird	85	Willie Hart	93
William Kelley	100	Lucius Hosmer	92
David Kinsley	100	Addie Houghton	95
George Lee	98	Hobart Mead	84
Annie Lee	100	Clesson Parker	93
Emery Clark	94	Martha Pratt	95
Ora Clough	100	Alberta Preston	98
Ella Cole	99	Bertie Reed	85
Elbridge Conant	99	Fred W. Reed	95
Lutie Conant	97	Mabel Richardson	99
Susie Conant	95	Herbert Robbins	100
Gertie Cutler	97	Sadie Sawyer	99
Arthur Davis	98	Lizzie Scofield	95
Hattie Davis	98	Carrie Shapley	97
Willie Davis	95	Martha Smith	98
Florence Dupee	99	Frank Teele	94
Florence Fletcher	98	Etta Tuttle	96
Harry Fletcher	99	Hattie Tuttle	92
Walter Gardner	88	Frank Whitcomb	85
Alice Guilford	96	Fred Whitcomb	97
Eugene Hall	95	Eugene White	95

[1] Town Report of February 26, 1884, p. 35.

[2] In later life the owner for many years of the Simon Hosmer homestead at what is now known as Kelley's Corner.

[3] An elder brother of Mr. Agustine B. Conant, now resident in Cambridge.

Of this group Luther Conant, Alice Guilford, Mildred Handley, Minnie Harris, Etta Tuttle, Willie Hart, Eugene Hall and George Burroughs (of Boxborough) were living in 1952.

It was at about this period that the various fraternal orders, particularly those with insurance features, began to expand into the smaller towns. The first of these to become established locally was Acton Council No. 795 of the Royal Arcanum which was organized September 4, 1883 with sixteen charter members. The initial group of officers consisted of Lucien S. Hosmer, Regent; Theron F. Newton, Vice-Regent; Lorenzo E. Reed, Secretary; Loren C. Baldwin, Collector; Charles B. Stone, Treasurer. For several years the meetings were held in the hall which at that time occupied the second story of the present post office building at South Acton. When subsequently the hall was pre-empted for school purposes the Arcanum held its meetings in the vestry of the Universalist Church. The Council dissolved July 25, 1931 and the membership transferred to Concord Council which then became the Concord/Acton Council.

Our preoccupation with the bounty question, the schools and whatnot has made it necessary that we by-pass temporarily some comment concerning two industries of South Acton that have played an important part in the story of the village.

In the early 1880's, Henry O. Lothrop invented and patented the offset for wound wire ferrules, thereby giving them a smooth finish where the wire began and ended. He manufactured these at his mill in South Boston until his retirement about 1898, when he sold the business to his nephew Frank B. Lothrop. He operated with a partner in Charlton City, Mass. for about five years. The partnership dissolved and Mr. Lothrop built the present factory on the site of a mill privilege where he had worked as a boy. The demand for wound wire ferrules decreased as the demand for pressed, punched and stamped ferrules for all types of brushes increased. To compensate small lines of metal specialties were added from time to time, including timers for Ford cars. Mr. Lothrop sold out his interest in the business a few years before his death, although the plant still bears the family name.

On November 9, 1886 the piano stool factory burned. It was immediately rebuilt by Mr. Charles A. Harrington and outfitted with steam as well as water power. Mr. C. W. Chadwick was in charge and under his direction the business was prosperous and successful. Mr. Harrington came to Acton in 1867 after having married in 1866 Mary Jane Faulkner, the daughter of Col. Winthrop E. Faulkner. He rebuilt and enlarged the old Faulkner Mills and was actively instrumental in imparting to South Acton a decided impetus toward prosperity. He was a native of Shrewsbury, was for several years in the

lumbering business in Potsdam, N. Y., in Wisconsin, and was a partner with Col. Faulkner in lumbering ventures in the South.

The modern phase of the piano stool business began when in 1888 Mr. C. W. Chadwick joined with Mr. Asaph Merriam under the firm name of Chadwick and Merriam. The factory was on the site of the present F. B. Lothrop Company. When Mr. Chadwick retired in 1891, Mr. Merriam bought the business and took in with him his two sons, Frank A. Merriam and William T. Merriam, thus forming the A. Merriam Company.

The factory burned December 27, 1895 so land and water privilege were acquired where the present factory is located. A suitable, well appointed plant for the manufacture of piano and organ stools was built and the business continued.

Mr. Asaph Merriam died at the age of seventy eight. He had begun manufacturing piano stools at twenty eight in Meriden, Connecticut, coming to Acton a year after his factory there had burned. He had established his business on a quality basis which was adhered to during his long career. After his death the sons carried on and enlarged along the lines he had laid out.

In 1925 the Merriam brothers reorganized the company to include their sons Harold A. Merriam and Herbert T. Merriam.

Through the years the styles of the product changed; the organ stools, at first very ornate, were followed by the spinning piano stool so often used as merry-go-rounds for young America; then followed the up-to-date piano benches, chairs and radio benches but the company policy never changed and for this there was a price to pay. Public desire had altered under the impact of radio and television and piano playing was no longer counted a cultural asset in the ordinary home. The Merriam Company has felt the impact of the new conditions and as of the present the plant is closed.

On June 25th, 1886 the first graduation exercises of the Acton High School were held in the Town Hall. These were the scholars who had started in 1883 and completed the three year course. At that time, and for long afterwards, it was customary for each senior to participate in the exercises by giving an essay, an oration, or some equivalent evidence of competence. There were six graduates and in view of the importance of the occasion the complete program of the evening's exercises is given herewith. Needless to say the Town Hall was crowded to capacity and the citizens of Acton felt justly proud of this milestone in community progress.

Program

Greeting Song, ... School
Prayer
Salutatory and Essay — "Character", ... Minnie G. Bassett
History, ... Marth C. Pratt
Song — "Home Returning", ... Quartette
Oration — "Education", ... Eugene L. Hall
Essay — "Over the Alps lies Italy", ... M. Florence Fletcher
Duet — "Witches Flight", ... Minnie G. and Blanche M. Bassett
Oration — "Have a Purpose", ... Emery W. Clark
Essay — "Conversation as a Fine Art", ... Carrie L. Shapley
Song — "Anniversary"
Essay — "Ever Onward, ever Upward", ... Martha C. Pratt
Prophecy, ... Eugene L. Hall
Song — (Selected)
Valedictory, ... Emery W. Clark

Presentation of Diplomas

Address, ... George A. Walton
Parting Song, ... School

Of this group Mr. Hall, who was tendered a birthday party on the afternoon of September 13, 1953, upon the occasion of his eighty fifth birthday, is the sole survivor. Florence Fletcher eventually taught in the high school and subsequently married Mr. Charles, the principal. Martha Pratt married Dr. Ernest Hosmer, a dentist resident in South Acton for several years. Emery Clark married Marion Hapgood and Mr. Hall mentioned above married Isabel Howard Bent of Sudbury. Minnie Bassett and Carrie Shapley never married.

By sheer good fortune it happens that the photographs of the principal and the graduating class, complete, are in the possession of Mrs. Andrew Torsleff, sister of Emery Clark, and appear in this volume. In addition the valedictory address, in its original form on old fashioned red lined 6 x 8 foolscap, is still in existence in the handwriting of the above mentioned Emory Clark. Since it was to be delivered orally it is not paragraphed. (The division into paragraphs is for the convience of the reader). The first page is missing. Both because of its historic interest and because it is a creditable piece of composition for a sixteen year old boy of sixty seven years ago it is herewith given in full.

. . . being the first graduates of the Acton High School, and regret at leaving the scene of our struggle for knowledge and the associations that cluster around it.

We have spent many happy days in our school. So happy indeed, that when we are gone from hence, we will many times wish ourselves back here. We didn't appreciate the advantages of our school system when we were young. But I think that as we grew older and our course became more and more near completion, we realized in a larger measure the benefits to be derived from our schooling and we hope improved our time accordingly.

The last few weeks have sped so rapidly that one can hardly believe they are gone. But if they have passed away rapidly now we may be assured that they will linger long in our memory. We will then think of them as the happiest days of our lives.

As the time draws near to say the parting words, a feeling of sadness creeps over us. We, united before, are now to be parted perhaps forever. Then indeed, our parting should be as cordial as possible. It is, however, no easy task to do this. We have been to the same school, recited in the same classes, and been under the same teacher, so long, that it seems unnatural to part us now. But however painful it may be the farewell words must be spoken — and so — in behalf of my classmates I bid you all, Friends, Teachers, Gentlemen of the Committee, and school — I bid you all farewell.

Citizens of Acton, we thank you for the High School. It has been our privilege to attend this school and although some of our number have been inconvenienced by its rotary character it is perhaps the best arrangement that can be made at present. We know that the school has been regarded as an experiment and that is devolves upon us to prove its success.

Although the accomodations have not been so good as we hope they will be in the near future, we have got along tolerably well and we hope the school will be continued for the benefit of our younger brothers and sisters.

We thank our teacher for all his exertions in our behalf. The care and zeal which he exercised in our instruction and the checking of any unruly spirit that we may have had, and other little attentions unappreciated at the time but for which we are now doubly grateful. I trust that our future lives will show the results of his patient, painstaking labor

and that our actions will reward him more than any words we can say now.

Schoolmates, you are enjoying the privileges of this school and should improve them to the best of your abilities. You are here for only a few short years. Make the most of them that you can. It is necessary for us to leave but we shall never forget you. As time goes on the advantages of the school will increase. We are only the pioneers who are sent forward to open up a new land, those that follow after will reap the most decided benefits. We wish you all success.

Dear Classmates, we meet tonight for the last time as a class. Today we are united, tomorrow parted. How quick the ties that bind us together as a class are snapped asunder. Some of us will attend other schools and others will go out into the world and seek a foothold there. How much we are prepared to do these will be seen hereafter. We know not what fate has in store for us. But be it what it may, we must do our best, remembering that tenacity of purpose and perseverance will accomplish anything. The world lies before us. Whatever we attain in the way of success will be due mainly to our own efforts. We will be just what we make ourselves. We will be responsible for our own condition. If we are not happy and contented it will be owing to some defect in our nature or character. We should seek to discover these defects and eradicate them as soon as possible.

The influence that a person has over those around him is asonishing. One cannot be too careful, then, that this influence is for god. Be kind and polite to everyone.

"To thine ownself be true and it must follow as the day the night that thou canst not be false to any man."

It will be recalled that when the high school was put into operation it was presumed that no congestion would occur for many years. Nevertheless, by 1886 we find Superintendent Rhoades bemoaning the fact that interest had become so pronounced that not only had more than half of the three year scholars signified the intention of continuing the fourth year but that there was reason to suppose that seventy six new prospects would be on hand in the autumn. As a matter of fact the actual number gaining entrance for the fall term was considerably less than anticipated so that it became possible to somehow "make-do" by distributing certain high school scholars among the several grammar schools. This highly unsatisfactory arrangement obviously could not long be tolerated and there was acute concern for the future.

The second class to complete the High School course was graduated in June of 1887. The group consisted of Bertha H. Dupee, Ernest E. Wetherbee, Bertha E. Hosmer, Sadie E. Sawyer, Albertine M. Preston, Susie E. Conant, and Hattie L. Tuttle. The only survivor is Bertha Dupee who subsequently became Mrs. J. Sidney White. The Misses Hosmer, Sawyer and Tuttle never married. Miss Conant married Herman W. Parker and Miss Preston married Hobart Mead.

At this time the number of scholars in the high school was forty seven and the teacher was Mr. A. W. Armstrong. According to those who vividly recall him he was properly named. He was large and powerful and could and would administer corporal punishment with gusto and effect. Each morning it was his custom to open school by reciting from memory a psalm or a chapter from the Bible. This technique, however, did not prove to be entirely successful since living witnesses testify that a small coterie of strapping young lads, who had lukewarm enthusiasm for learning coupled with certain unique notions regarding school deportment, provided the aforesaid Mr. Armstrong with occasional physical exercise. He invariably won but not without realizing rather frequently that he had been in a tussle.

As might be expected the establishment of the high school immediately precipitated the question of transportation, since the scholars from two of the villages always had at least two miles to go. The matter came up for action in two town meetings, in April of 1886 and May of 1888, but in each case the article was dismissed. A similar fate befell another attempt in 1891. Any really effectual transportation of high school scholars did not take place for several decades.

The ensuing years constituted an era of peace and quiet. There were no political battles and no major projects in process. The West and South villages thrived industrially and the Centre became more and more a wholly residential community with a considerable degree of isolation.

One or two minor items appear in the records that are worthy of mention. In April of 1885 the town voted to build a tomb at Mt. Hope Cemetery. This is the first mention of an official name for the west burying ground. If it was so named by the cemetery committee, here, as was the case with Woodlawn, no recorded town action was ever taken to confirm it.

In March of 1888 the town voted that the communion service of the old first church be placed in the care of the town clerk, to be kept by him and his successors as relics of the town.

In April of 1889 a vote was passed to discontinue the use of oxen on road work. It was immediately reconsidered in the same session,

was brought up again a month later and again failed of a majority. Consequently oxen continued to be used by those who perferred them. To the modern reader this action may appear hopelessly reactionary but back of it lay a deal of sound sense. Oxen to be sure are slow of motion, far slower than horses, but they have their points. Horses are highly nervous and even a well trained and willing pair will not pull for more than a few seconds on a hitch that fails to move. Consequently in clearing stump land, or plowing where stubborn roots prevail, the constant stopping and continued annoyance soon drive them into a frenzied lather. In some cases even though they may survive the first day they will never respond again under similar circumstances.

A lusty pair of willing oxen, on the other hand, particularly if drawing with a Dutch[1] yoke, can pull tremendously. They almost never get excited and if the load fails to move they just quietly lay into it and increase the strain for an interminable time, until even the witnesses sometimes wonder how long they will persist. Horses want to do most of the pulling with the leg muscles whereas oxen seem to sense instinctively that the trick is to constantly increase the body angle and let their huge weight do the work. Many of the author's own generation can remember the familiar sight of Mr. Frank Pratt and his pair of Holsteins drawing boulders on a stone drag under conditions that would have driven a pair of horses beyond control. In spite of their deliberateness capable oxen were, in an earlier era, the counterpart of the modern bulldozer.

In 1889 the long burning question of a town library came to a brisk and unexpected climax through the generosity of Mr. William A. Wilde, a native son. The present beautiful brick and brownstone structure was the result of his enduring pride in the place of his birth and his desire to do somethingg tangible for it. On February 27th, 1890 Mr. Wilde addressed to the selectmen the following letter:

Malden, Mass., Feb. 27, 1890

"To the Selectmen of Acton:

Gentlemen, — For a long time past it has been my intention, if ever I was able to do so, to remember my native town by the gift of some memorial to the memory of those brave and patriotic men of Acton who so freely gave their time, strength, and health — and many of them their lives — in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-65.

To carry out this plan in what seemed to me the most

[1] The ordinary American yoke lay across the back of the neck and had bows hanging below. The Dutch yoke, on the other hand, was specially designed for rugged service. The beam was lashed to the horns and lay across the foreheads of the oxen. In this hitch there were no bows to choke and no chance to gall the shoulders or neck.

advantageous and permanent method possible, I have purchased the estate of the Rev. James Fletcher, adjacent to the Town House, and erected thereon a Memorial Library, placing upon its shelves some four thousand volumes, more or less, and I beg the privilege of presenting this property to the town as a free gift, only stipulating that it shall forever be kept as a Memorial Library, and free to all citizens of the patriotic old town of Acton, which I shall always love and be proud of.

If it shall please the town to accept this gift I shall be glad to pass all necessary papers for the transfer of the property to whom and at such time as the town shall direct.

I am, gentlemen, yours truly,

WILLIAM A. WILDE

This letter was read to the citizens of Acton convened in town meeting March 3, 1890 by Mr. Howard B. White, chairman of the Board of Selectmen. Thereupon Rev. James Fletcher presented the following resolutions which were unanimously adopted, forwarded to Mr. Wilde, and also inscribed upon the town records.

"WHEREAS a charter of incorporation has passed the Legislature and been signed by his Excellency Gov. J. Q. A. Brackett incorporating the Memorial Library, and Hon. William A. Wilde, a native of Acton — now a resident of Malden — has signified his readiness to deed to the town the Memorial Library Building just completed at his expense, and the land on which it stands, and all the appurtenances thereof, including books already selected, the Memorial Room and the town vault for the archives of the town, —

"Resolved 1st, We, the inhabitants of the town of Acton, in town meeting assembled, do accept the trust and authorize the Selectmen, in behalf of the town, to sign all papers and perform all the acts necessary to complete the transfer of the property to the care of the trustees.

"Resolved 2nd, In passing this vote we wish to express to Mr. Wilde — in behalf of the present inhabitants of the town; in behalf of all future generations who may be resident here, and participants in the benefits to be enjoyed; in behalf of the soldiers of the War of the Rebellion, whose memory and valor he has so tenderly cherished in the name and arrangement of the structure — our profound appreciation of his generous gift.

"We assure him of our hearty thanks for remembering

the place of his birth by a memento so enduring and so befitting the past history and future needs of the town.

"We assure him of our cordial co-operation in doing what in us lies to perpetuate the intentions and possibilities of the trust.

We tender to him, his companion and his children our best wishes for their life, health and prosperity, and our prayers that the donation, in which they each have a personal share and honor, may contribute to their mutual and lasting enjoyment."

It was further resolved that the whole board of trustees be a committee authorized to make all necessary arrangements for the dedication of the building on the following 19th of April. The date was subsequently changed to May 24th.

The house and barn of the aforementioned Mr. James Fletcher were moved to make way for the library and are now the property of Mr. Winthrop Richmond near the Acton Centre school house. The barn caught fire in the great conflagration of 1862 and a careful look at the interior will reveal the charred portions even today.[1]

The corporation responsible for the library under the charter consisted of Luther Conant, Adelbert Mead, Moses Taylor, Hiram J. Hapgood, Delette H. Hall, and Daniel Wetherbee. These were constituted trustees for life with power to fill vacancies in case of death or resignation. Three additional trustees were chosen by the town to serve terms of three, two, and one years. William D. Tuttle, James Fletcher, and Howard White were selected for the respective terms.

New England was early noted for the movement which gave to its towns library facilities far in excess of the rest of the nation. By his generous gift Mr. Wilde put Acton well out in front. Very few towns have so beautiful and spacious accomodations. As time has passed the town has lived up to its responsibility. In 1950 there were 20,877 volumes and the average daily circulation was 191.

As may be expected, the dedication exercises were an event of major importance. It was an unusual thing for a town as small as Acton was in 1890 to have such a library to grace its common.[2]

These exercises were opened by vocal selections by the Adelphi

[1] Testimony of Mr. Frank Fiske whose father resided there for many years. So far as is known Mr. Fiske is the only person now living who worked on the library. He and Roswell Tuttle, who lived in the farm house that stands closest to Grassy Pond, hauled the brick and much of the stone from the freight cars at East Acton. A single block of the original red sandstone still rests just beside the wall as one enters Mr. Fiske's yard.

[2] Population in 1890 was 1897. The frontispiece is a picture taken just at the time of the dedication. Close inspection will show the temporary scantling fence erected to protect the seeding.

Quartette followed by an invocation by Rev. Theodore C. Pease at the close of which an address of welcome was made by the President of the Day, Mr. F. C. Nash, which was eloquent and appropriate to the occasion. Mr. Wilde then gave his presentation speech which was brief and modest and appears herewith in detail.

"Let us hope that this building may serve for our soldiers the double purpose of a hall for social uses as well as a memorial for their dead and a library for their use and entertainment. Let us hope also that this library will prove of lasting advantage to the town by adding to its means of culture by furnishing to its youth the opportunities to gratify a literary taste, and, perhaps to lay the foundation of a higher education and may also prove a point of attraction to those seeking in the summer months rest and recreation in a country home.

Gentlemen, I now have geat pleasure in presenting to you, as the agents of the town, the keys of the Memorial Library and a deed in fee simple of the land on which it stands, together with all the books and personal property which it contains, subject only to the one condition that it shall be devoted and used forever for the purposes for which it was founded."

When the applause which followed the address had subsided he was presented with a beautiful bouquet of flowers by Mrs. Charles Pitman on behalf of the ladies of Acton. Miss Zelia A. Cutter also made a floral offering.

The gift of the library was accepted by Howard White, chairman of the Board of Selectmen, and in turn was by him made over to the president of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Luther Conant, who, in his characteristic style made forceful and pertinent remarks. The principle address was made by Hon. John D. Long in which was emphasized the beneficence of such a gift as a repository of the world's great minds and of the memorials of the military history of the town. This was followed by a poem by Mrs. Clara Hapgood Nash and brief addresses by Governor Brackett, Rev. Alonzo Ames Miner, former president of Tufts College, and Rev. Alexander Blackburn of Lowell. Rev. Mr. Heath gave the benediction.

At the close of the dedicatory exercises in the tent there was dinner served to the Isaac Davis Post and the invited guests in the church vestry, after which the Post and guests, seventy five in number, formed in line with Delette H. Hall, Commander, and Isaac Davis drum-corps in full rank furnishing the music, marched to the town hall. There Dr. Isaiah Hutchins, the chief marshal, formed the line with Gov. J. Q. A. Brackett, invited guests, officers of the town and trustees

of the library and with the Grand Army Post as escort marched down the common and returning to the library building performed the dedicatory services for the tablets on either side of the arched vestibule. Commander Hall, at the conclusion of the simple exercises appointed a guard of honor under Adjutant Samuel R. Guilford and Herbert E. Preston, officer of the guard, who made a stack of arms, surmounted by the national ensign in the vestibule, over which stood as guard a comrade in full uniform armed with musket and fixed bayonet. A passage of scripture was read, the exercises were declared ended and the procession reformed and marched back to the tent.[1]

Mr. William A. Wilde, the donor of the library, was born in Acton July 11, 1827, at the home of his father Joseph Wilde, who lived in the house that sets in the Y formed by Parker St. and the prolongation of Concord St. that goes out toward Sinking Pond.[2] His grandfather lived on the old Deacon Fletcher homestead now the residence of Mr. Jorgen Larson. Mr. Wilde married three times. The first wife was Lois Mace of Pepperell, the second Lydia Jane Bride of Berlin, Mass., and the third Celestina Dona Hoyt of Wentworth, N. H. There were three children by the second marriage and two by the last. Mr. Wilde was a prominent publisher in Boston. Among other items his company issued the Sunday School Quarterlies that were used almost universally in the Congregational churches of New England at that time. He was educated at Groton and Pepperell Academies. He taught school for twelve years, was superintendant of the Malden schools, represented the city for two terms in the legislature, and was chairman of the House Committee on Education. In addition he was a trustee of the Malden library for eight years and was one of the Prison Commissioners of Massachusetts.

The style of architecture is Romanesque and the external appearance and the internal arrangements and furnishings are in harmony with this idea. The materials are red brick and brownstone. The extreme length is sixty six feet six inches and the width thirty two feet ten inches. The principal entrance opens toward the south and through a large, solid freestone arch with rich mouldings and carved spandrels. Once through this main arch, the observer finds on either hand two immense slate tablets. On one, under the heading, "OUR HONORED DEAD" are inscribed the names of the twenty nine sons of Acton who lost their lives in the Civil War[3] On the other appears the names of those who were fortunate enough to survive. On entering the building, a reading room, sixteen by twenty five feet is found at the left. Directly ahead is a room originally designed for the trustees but now used mostly as a repository for important town relics. The

[1] The tent stood between the town hall and Woodbury Lane.
[2] Now the home of Mr. Edward Howard.
[3] See Appendix XVI.

stack room, thirty two feet by twenty four, has alcoves on two levels.

The dedication exercises cost the town two hundred and seventy eight dollars, an insignificant sum by present standards, but at that time it encompassed the expenses of the speaker, Hon. John D. Long, his entertainment by Dr. Charles B. Sanders, the rental of a huge tent and the cost of its erection, a drum corps, printing and postage and twelve teams for the transportation of the crowds in attendance.[1]

Previous to the opening of the library in June of 1890 Miss Hattie E. Tuttle, Miss Susan Conant and Mrs. Frank Fisk assisted in the cataloging and readying the general facilities. Mrs. Fisk still lives just a stone's throw from the scene of her early activities and is an interested and alert student of Actonaria. On the opening day there were 3973 volumes on the shelves. The first librarian was Miss Ida Hale who retired from duty in 1896. She was followed by Miss Viola S. Tuttle until her retirement because of ill health in 1902. Miss Flora Reed then served for several months but did not care to continue in the work and was followed by Mr. Arthur F. Davis who was elected by the trustees in May of 1902.

One of the first donations received for the library by one other than the donor was a check for one hundred dollars from Mr. Alvin Lothrop of South Acton and Washington, D. C. to be expended in the purchase of a suitable clock. With it was purchased the fine hall clock that has marked the passing hours ever since. At about the same time friends of Mr. Wilde in Malden had a life sized crayon portrait made by William T. Robinson and this has constantly hung in a prominent place in the reading room.

While not a gift in the ordinary sense Mr. Moses Taylor showed his interest and generosity by assuming the expense of moving the Fletcher buildings and clearing the land upon which the library stands. He also donated two swords, one carried by his grandfather at the battle of Bennington and the other by Silas Jones at South Boston in 1812. Edwin J. Piper and brother of Springfield, Mass. sent the drum and sword originally belonging to Major Josiah Piper of Acton. Silas Hosmer presented a paper cutter made from wood from the timbers of the Old North Bridge. At about this time also Mr. Wilde donated a fine stain proof engraving of General U. S. Grant.

In 1891 Mr. Moses Taylor gave a picture of Libby Prison as it appeared in Richmond in 1863. The portrait of General George B. McClellan came from Mr. Wilde as did also the fine steel engraving entitled "The Last Cartridge" which represents an episode in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. On the evening of April 20th, 1891 Mr. Wilde in the town hall presented the Isaac Davis Post G. A. R.,

[1] Town report of March, 1891, gives itemized account.

the members of which were in attendance in large numbers, an artists proof engraving of Bachelder's picture of the Battle of Gettysburg, at the time of Longstreet's assault, July 3, 1863, to be placed in Memorial Hall of the Library. At the same time the swords of Capt. Aaron C. Handley were presented.

In the summer of 1893 Mr. Wilde and his family toured Europe and on their return he presented to the library the beautiful copy of the famous "The Holy Family" by Andrae del Sarto. Also at about this same time Mr. Wilde showed his continued generosity by donating the rare Italian oil painting of Columbus pleading his cause in the convent of La Rabida and also the marble bust "Meditation" bought by him while in Pisa. The bust is the work of one of the most prominent Italian sculptors, E. Marini, of Rome. It was placed in position in Memorial Hall by Mr. Wilde in person.

There was also given at this time a lock of hair taken from the head of James Hayward when his remains were removed from the old cemetery in 1851 and placed under the Davis Monument, after having been in the grave seventy six years. The presentation was made by Mrs. Agusta P. Parker and Porter Woodbury, children of James Woodbury. The lock of hair was initially placed in the library vault but was shortly afterward properly mounted and put on perpetual exhibition, where it is at present, apparently in as good condition as on the day of the burial a century and three quarters ago.

Other Woodbury relics, which came from Mrs. Augusta Parker, included

(a) The shoe buckles which were worn by Capt. Isaac Davis when he fell at the North Bridge on April 19, 1775.

(b) A large ancient volume, printed in England not later than 1740, called "A BODY OF DIVINITY". It was the property of Rev. John Swift the father of the Rev. John Swift who was Acton's first minister. It was afterward owned by Rev. Moses Adams and was the property of Rev. Woodbury at the time of his death.

(c) The original manuscript of the sermon preached at the laying of the cornerstone of the present Congregational church.

(d) The dedication sermon of the same.

(e) The speech of Rev. James T. Woodbury in the legislature pleading for the monument together with other papers.

In February of 1893 Hon. Stevens Hayward, who had represented both the town and the district in the House and the Senate, and who lived in the imposing colonial mansion which stood just a few rods

westerly from the monument,[1] presented to the town the Hayward powder horn bearing the inscription

> *"James Hayward of Acton was killed at Lexington on the 19th of April, 1775, by a ball which passed through his powder horn into his body".*

The relic was placed in the memorial case by Hon. Edward Everett.

On the same day Mr. William D. Tuttle, town clerk from 1854 to 1896, deposited the first communion service of the original church in Acton, whose meeting house was built during the years 1736-38; also three brittania goblets, one brittania platter, and two tankards; also a baptismal font, the gift of John and Mary Hunt in 1738; also a later service consisting of two brittania tankards and one large brittania platter; and in addition three silver goblets with two handles each, presented by Col. John Cuming to the church in Christ in Acton in 1774.

To itemize the gifts in detail by dates is too large a project to be undertaken here but through the years the library has been fortunate to receive a cap formerly worn by the Davis Blues, presented by Supt. Joseph Scott of the Massachusetts Reformatory, a marble statue "Industry" donated by Mr. Wilde, from Dr. Wetherbee of Cambridge a photograph of the Acton Company that represented the town at the one hundredth anniversary of Concord Fight at Concord, grouped about the minute man statue on the battleground, a painting by Mr. Arthur Davis, donated by Mr. Luther Conant depicting the departure of Co. E., 6th Massachusetts Regiment in 1861, marble statues of Lincoln and Washington by the American sculptor Thomas Ball, a full set of the official records of the Civil War, both Federal and Confederate, one hundred and two volumes, from the widow of Col. W. H. Chapman the swords and revolvers belonging to her husband together with some rifles captured from the Confederates, a pair of cuff links worn by Solomon Smith at Concord Fight from the estate of Luke Smith, a crayon portrait of Mehitable Piper presented by her grandson Edwin J. Piper of Springfield, from the estate of Mrs. M. E. A. Williams of East Acton a bronze statuete of Sir Isaac Newton, from the estate of Miss Bessie Ball, a former school teacher and resident, a large oil painting of the Ball Pencil Factory in East Acton owned by her father, from Mrs. S. T. Fletcher two photographs of two of Acton's early citizens, Rev. James Fletcher and Doc. Charles Little, from Mrs. Walter Taylor a colored engraving of the old camp of the 6th Regiment near Suffolk, Va. where the Acton company

[1] At the turn of the century this imposing edifice, with two enormous horse-chestnut trees in the foreground, was one of the imposing landmarks on the Common. It was richly furnished with huge oil paintings and tapestries and was for the last decade of its existence used as a summer home by Mrs. Elizabeth Blood and Dr. Louis Allen and his sisters. The front of the house and the trees are visible in the frontispiece.

was stationed, an inlaid gavel and case composed of one hundred and eighty nine pieces of historic wood made and presented to the town by Henry D. Scarlet who lived in Acton for twenty nine years, together with numerous other documents and mementoes of the town and those in some way associated with it.

On December 13, 1889 Acton had an unusual educational experience in that it played host for a Teacher's Institute. The school committees and teachers of the towns of Acton, Concord, Maynard, Carlisle, Sudbury, Stow, Boxborough, and Littleton met in the High School room at South Acton for a conclave which was unique. The seventy five persons present were intensely interested in the program provided by the State Board of Education. There was an address by Secretary Dickerson upon the principles of teaching; another by Superintendent Aldrich of Putney, Mass.[1] on the teaching of arithmetic; another by Arthur C. Boyden of the Bridgewater Normal School on physiology; another by Superintendent E. H. Davis of Chelsea, a native of Acton, on primary reading; and one on drawing by Henry T. Bailey, State Agent. A bountiful repast was served by the ladies of the village in the Universalist vestry.

It was in this same year that the state passed two laws that had large influence upon the towns throughout the commonwealth. The first was the compulsory school attendance statute[2] which made it imcumbent upon every person having under his or her control a child between the ages of eight and fourteen to see to it that the child should attend some public day school for at least thirty weeks a year.

The second statute specified that in all public schools of the state the last regular session prior to Memorial Day should be devoted to excercises of a patriotic nature. So long as the veterans of the Grand Army were able to do so it was the custom for some soldier in uniform to visit the school during the afternoon and discuss the experiences or the lessons of the Civil War. Those were days of peace. The youngsters regarded anyone who had seen actual conflict as an amazing personality and hence these blue clad veterans were looked upon with awe and heard with an avid interest. To an Acton boy or girl of that era Richmond, Vicksburg, Atlanta and New Orleans, were places on the map that one learned but they were quite beyond the limits of where one would ever go. America had not then begun to roll on rubber tires.

It was in this year also (1889) that Mrs. Harriet Gardner, one of Acton's most beloved and successful teachers, began her career. The town has been fortunate over and over again in the calibre of its

[1] Town report of March, 1890, page 38. The statement that Mr. Aldrich was from Putney, Mass. is a misprint. There is no such town in the state. Putney, Vt. is a possibility.

[2] Town report for March, 1891, page 42 gives both acts in detail.

school personnel but Mrs. Gardner belongs to a small group of five women who not only were endowed with the temperament, the humanistic attitude, and the infinite patience necessary for distinctive success in their calling, but who, in addition resided in Acton throughout their entire teaching career.

Chronologically the first of the group was Miss Susie Wetherbee who taught at the East School from 1879 to 1891.[1] Lest some feel inclined to think lightly of a service span of twelve years let it be remembered that this was a one room school having all the grades. Furthermore in that day it was unusual for any teacher, regardless of sex, to stay long in any position. Discipline was terribly difficult. Some of the scholars were disinterested, mature boys and girls who were three or more years behind their normal age group. Not infrequently, as has been pointed out previously, a few weeks, or even a day or two, was the limit of the teacher's endurance. Several changes each term was regarded as customary in certain schools. That any person should remain a fixture for twelve years was not merely remarkable — it was a major miracle. Miss Wetherbee is described by some of her pupils still living as a woman of ordinary stature and vitality. What success she had was due to her competence, inspiring teaching, and superlative personality.

Next came Mrs. Gardner. She received her education at Ayer and first taught in Acton, as Miss Harriet Freeman, in the fall term of 1879. Ten years later, having married in the meantime, she reassumed her duties at the West Primary and continued for thirty eight years as teacher, counselor, nurse, and foster mother for a thousand or more of the children of the village. She eventually became an institution — a sort of superlative by which all others might be judged. She was librarian of the Citizen's Library from 1903 to 1921 and was very active in the religious and social work of the Universalist Church. Despite her limited means she did a deal of good for many of the needy children of the community. She was a lover of nature and for that reason a spruce tree planted on the plot of ground near the depot was one time dedicated in her memory.

The Centre was fortunate in having two such outstanding and capabel public servants in the personages of Miss Ella L. Miller and Miss Martha F. Smith. The former trained at Framingham Normal, started at the North School in 1896, and subsequently came to the Centre Intermediate. She was eventually transferred to the Grammar department where she remained until the illness of her parents made it necessary that in June of 1926 she resign to care for them as full time housekeeper and nurse. Because of her ample stature and

[1] Not to be confused with the woman of the same name who became Mrs. Delette H. Hall in 1867.

strength she was a completely competent disciplinarian, as numerous youths inclined to rough and tumble tactics precipitately discovered. But this was only a minor phase of her character. The better scholars were enthusiastic about her and even the obstreperous realized, by the time they arrived at maturity, that the days spent under her guidance were among the most profitable in their lives. By that time they had begun to see something of the great good heart and enduring interest that lay behing her insistence upon attention and sincere effort. All through her teaching career she kept an up-to-date record of her total enrollment and could report immediately upon the location, marital status, and number of children of each. For many years she was secretary of Acton Grange and was a constant attendant and worker in the Congregational church.

The latter, Miss Martha F. Smith, prepared at Lowell Normal, took over the Center Primary in 1902 and for twenty four years served with distinction in that capacity. She was motherly and bubbling with humor and her scholars learned and enjoyed themselves simultaneously. For a long season she was a teacher in the Congregational Sunday school and, being gifted with an excellent and powerful contralto voice, was a mainstay in the choir as well.

Miss Julia McCarthy, the last of the quintette, spent her childhood about a furlong from the Centre school,[1] prepared at the Fitchburg Normal and started her teaching career at the South Primary in 1906. By a wide margin she is Acton's marathon teacher since she is still in active and efficient service and full of the zest of life. As of the present she has worked with diligence, fidelity, and outstanding success in one building for forty six years, a feat which is a record which will doubtless stand for many decades if not in perpetuity. This has been accomplished because she has been blessed with health and two other priceless characteristics, namely, an unquenchable enthusiasm for giving of herself to the youth and a rare turn of mind — call it naivete if you will — that makes of each day a new adventure. She is one of those fortunate persons that are eternally rejuvinated by service to mankind and not made cynical by its shortcomings. With beginning of the fall term of 1953 she will leave her South Acton post for the first time to take over the principalship of the new elementary school on Massachusetts Ave..

On November 3, 1890 Acton Lodge No. 203, Independent Order of Odd Fellows, was instituted. The early records were destroyed by fire as were also those from 1904 to 1918 hence a complete list of the original officers cannot be given. A copy of the first by-laws, however, mentions Charles H. Stone as Noble Grand, William H. Lawrence

[1] The present residence of Mr. Wallace Warren, opposite the newly erected scientific laboratory.

as Vice-Grand, and William F. Stevens as Secretary. For a season meetings were held in Grand Army Hall but in 1893 Mr. Hanson A. Littlefield who was very active in I. O. O. F. work built the Littlefield Store Block with lodge rooms on the third floor. This building burned in 1903 and the lodge erected a new building in 1905. The new store occupied the whole first floor, the second floor served as an auditorium and dance hall, and the third floor again was used by the Odd Fellows. As of December 28, 1950 the Acton Lodge consolidated with Concord.

Mention of Mr. Littlefield brings to mind another of the town's business men of a past era. In 1884 Mr. Littlefield sold his carpentry and building business to one of his men, Mr. Frank Harris, and started a general store on the site now occupied by the I. O. O. F. building. This action was pursuant of his appointment as postmaster under the first Cleveland administration. At about the same time he also sold his interest in the Littlefield and Robinson Cider Jelly Manufacturing Company, which product he had invented, to Mr. Robinson, who ran it for several years and sold the business and the mill to Mr. James Kinsley.

From 1885 to 1889 Mr. Littlefield had the post office in the south east side of the store. In the basement the Littlefield Anti-fly Company manufactured a repellant that had an extensive market both in this country and abroad. The general store continued in this building until 1893 at which time the edifice was moved and converted into a dwelling house and a modern business block was erected on the abandoned site.

With the return of Cleveland for his second administration Mr. Littlefield again became postmaster and moved the post office to his apartment house that stood opposite the Baptist Church. This building was sold in 1926 to Mr. George V. Mead to clear the site for the common for the West Village.

In 1903 the Littlefield estate sold the store to a Mr. Fitts who ran it for about a year at which time it was totally consumed by fire as mentioned above. The site was sold to the Odd Fellows at the present building erected. With the languishing of the Acton lodge the property came into the hands of Mr. Albert Jenks and was converted into the present cold storage plant.

In 1891 the school committee began to consider seriously the matter of grading the schools and rearranging the whole system. This move was being forced upon the town by the shift in the location of the youthful population. In his annual report Mr. James Fletcher, chairman of the board, made the following pertinent observations.

"The idea of consolidation is forced upon us by the changed conditions within fifty years. Fifty years ago

there must have been at least a hundred scholars in the eastern and northeastern portions of the town. Large family groups were scattered in all that section of the town, some of them counting by the dozen. Now only about half that number can be found in the two schools at the North and East combined. The same is true of the Centre. Within the memory of some now living a hundred scholars were in one school with one teacher. The discipline of the crowd was ordinarily enough for any master to manage without wasting his strength on minor matters of instruction. The little ones in the lower seats were pleased if they had one chance of recognition in the course of the day from the master in his desk. If only these large family groups on the hills and by the brooks could be duplicated, we might drop the question of transportation, and have the grade in the same old spot.'

He went on further to say, "*In* 1826 *four hundred and twelve pupils attended schools in the town. The number now* (1891) *is two hundred and fifty four with a population nearly double what it was in* 1826, *and a valuation more than double what it was then.*"

As a result of the conditions outlined the committee proposed that the town be divided into three school districts, the Centre absorbing the North and East and the South taking in the South east.[1] In addition it was proposed that instead of having only the designations Primary and Grammar that an Intermediate division be introduced. Still further it was proposed that transportation be provided from the North and East to the Centre, and likewise from the South East to the South. In spite of the eminent common sense of this proposal it was not fully implemented until several years later.

Very shortly after the precious relics were deposited in the library, within a month in fact, Acton sustained a tremendous loss in the sudden death of Rev. James Fletcher. He was born August 5, 1823 and died on the evening of March 28, 1893. Throughout his life he held many town offices and other positions of trust and responsibility. He was the author of that portion of the History of Middlesex County embracing the material of some sixty pages that subsequently has been bound under the title "ACTON IN HISTORY".

On the evening of his death the village Improvement Society, in which he was always interested, was having in the town hall one of its periodic entertainments. Suddenly the great town house bell

[1] Town report for 1891-92, page 46. In the light of the figures given by Mr. Fletcher for 1826 it is interesting to note that the town report for 1950 gives 228 for the high school and 380 for the elementary schools.

began to ring the fire alarm and word was brought that the blacksmith shop was in flames. This establishment had been operated as a blacksmith and wheelwright shop by Edwin A. Phalen but had been subsequently sold to Newton Bean. Mr. Fletcher, despite his seventy years, could not depart from a long life of public service, and worked all too strenuously for a man of his age. After the fire was subdued to the point where other neighboring buildings were safe he made his way to his home where he collapsed and failed to survive the night.[1]

The Improvement Society mentioned above was, as its name implies, an organization designed to do something about community needs. There was one in each village and each was active in its own way. The service clubs of the present era, such as Rotary and Kiwanis and the like, their great works and elaborate machinery notwithstanding, lack something these earlier groups had, namely, complete independence and wholly local interest and support. Street lighting and snow removal from the sidewalks loomed large in their programs but at bottom their scope, whether by intention or otherwise, was larger and more complex The village Improvement Society was a school of citizenship and civic pride made manifest in works.

At the Centre there developed a close tie between the Improvement Society and amateur dramatics. In October of 1885 there arrived in Acton Mr. and Mrs. Charles Pitman[2] both of whom had enthusiasm and ability in this direction. They, together with Mr. James B. Tuttle and others[3] put on many plays and secured in due course an elaborate set of knock-down scenery with an impressive proscenium for an enlarged town hall stage. A heavy roll-up curtain extending the full width of the stage presented when lowered a rather guady but presumably recognizable impression of a seashore scene in Corsica. In case the spectator was in doubt the appended title removed the difficulty.

From time to time local scenery painters tried their hand with results on the whole acceptable. Sometimes a carping critic took exception to the impossible orientation of a crescent moon, or giggled at the sight of a full grown crow perched on a spear of orchard grass,

[1] Rev. Fletcher lived in the house near the church which is at present occupied by Mr. Walter Stevens.

[2] The Pitmans lived on Newtown Road in the house for many years owned by Charles Edwards. The present owner is Frank Greenough. Mrs. Pitman eventually became too ill with tuberculosis to be active and the family moved to Colorado Springs with results far exceeding expectations. As this is being written Mrs. Pitman, now 91 and in excellent health is making preparations to journey to Chicago to attend the marriage of her granddaughter. Mr. Pitman died three years ago.

[3] Arthur Taylor, Harry Tuttle, Viola Tuttle, Amelia Robbins, Emily Noyes, Harriet Phalen, Daniel Lakin, Arthur Davis. Upon one occasion the whole group went to Boston en-masse to see a play. The dramatic club disbanded in 1896 at which time Mrs. Pitman was secretary.

but the actors and the general public had an uproarious time and did not feel that the evening had been ruined if, as once transpired, the hero, upon being thrown down by the villian at the end of a scene, misjudged his position with the result that the heavy wooden boom of the descending curtain fell across his neck and pinned him to the floor with his head exposed to the audience. Praise be that sophistication had not then taken the fun out of life.

In 1892 the state had passed a statute making it possible for several towns to unite in engaging the services of a school superintendent. Acton took advantage of this opportunity and the local school committee met in Worcester in joint session with the committees from Sturbridge and West Brookfield and elected Mr. Edward Dixon as superintendent for the three towns. Under this agreement Acton and West Brookfield each paid three tenths of the cost.

In September of 1893, just ten years after its inception, the high school ceased to be a roving project and was permanently located on the second floor of the South schoolhouse. Moreover two teachers were on the staff, namely, Mr. W. A. Charles as principal and his assistant Miss M. Florence Fletcher.[1] Miss Fletcher, it may be recalled, was one of the six in the first class to be graduated. She had no specialized training but had proved so adept at the East school that it was deemed desirable to give her prior consideration for the post. The team was not only a pedagogical success from the outset—it terminated in a matrimonial alliance.

With this session was inaugurated the full four year course. Two types were offered to meet the needs of those who did and those who did not anticipate further work in college. This was a most important innovation. The details are given herewith as a matter of record.

CLASSICAL COURSE

First Year

Fall	Latin		Arithmetic	Civil Government
Winter	Latin		Arithmetic	Physiology
Spring	Latin	(Ceasar)	Arithmetic	Physical Geography

Second Year

Fall	Caesar	Algebra	Physics	English Literature
Winter	Caesar	Algebra	Physics	English Literature
Spring	Caesar	Algebra	Physics	English Literature

[1] Mr. Charles received a salary of $1000.00 and Miss Fletcher $450.00. Sixty seven scholars enrolled.

Third Year

Fall	Virgil or French	Plane Geometry	English History
Winter	Virgil or French	Plane Geometry	English History
Spring	Virgil or French	Plane Geometry	English History

Fourth Year

Fall	Cicero or French	Zoology	General History
Winter	Cicero or French	Astronomy	General History
Spring	Cicero or French	Chemistry	Political Economy

ENGLISH COURSE

First Year

Fall	English Grammar	Civil Government	Arithmetic
Winter	English Grammar	Physiology	Arithmetic
Spring	English Grammar	Physical Geography	Arithmetic

Second Year

Fall	Rhetoric, English Literature	Algebra	Physics
Winter	Rhetoric, English Literature	Algebra	Physics
Spring	Rhetoric, English Literature	Algebra	Physics

Third Year

Fall	Fall French	Plane Geometry	Geology
Winter	Winter French	Plane Geometry	Elocution
Spring	Spring French	Plane Geometry	Botany

Fourth Year

Fall	French	Zoology	Solid Geometry or General History
Winter	French	Astronomy	Solid Geometry or General History
Spring	French	Chemistry	Solid Geometry or Political Economy

Readings, declamations and compositions throughout each course. Book-keeping once a week.

This move respecting the high school was but one of several which in toto showed that Acton was beginning to really take hold of the whole school set-up in a forthright manner. The South-East school,[1] which had been dragging along for several years with but six or eight scholars, was discontinued, and the pupils from that section, including

[1] The site was on the east side of Concord St. near its junction with Parker St.

those who might be ready for high school, were transported to the South village at town expense by Mr. W. S. Jones.[2]

Immediately thereafter arrangements were made with some fifteen citizens in remote parts of the town, having children of high school age, to defray transportation expenses. Those living in North Acton received nine dollars per child per term, those in East Acton seven dollars, those in the Centre six dollars, and those in West Acton three dollars. It appears that each family was at liberty to transport its child or children in whatever manner seemed best. Those from the West village, since for them the train was available, received the lowest reimbursement. In the case of Mr. Hammond Taylor, who lived in the old Brabrook house, near the intersection of Pope road and Strawberry Hill Road, the problem was acute and the seven dollars he received was no honorarium. His children could, by walking a generous mile along a back country road, arrive at the East Acton depot, make a change at Concord Junction, and eventually arrive at South Acton if the Gods were propitious. The largest stipend went to Mr. Charles I. Miller, station agent at North Acton for his three eldest children, Samuel, Alice and Ella.

The new four year course appears to have given rise to a decided esprit-de-corps among the scholars. In November of 1893 there was published the first number of a monthly journal entitled the ACTONIAN, the contributors to which were all members of the school. This was the first organized literary production, so far as is known, of any Acton school group. Superintendent Dixon was proud of the effort and made it a point to give it special emphasis in his annual report.

The same zeal carried over into other interests. It was during this period that the group gave an entertainment in the town hall, which showed a profit of fifty dollars, for the purchase of a piano.

These evidences that a new line of thought had taken hold of the community outlook on school matters was most pleasing to the constructive minded citizens of the town but they realized that only a beginning had been made. The method of stove heating was inadequate; the laboratories for the High School were largely non-existent; and at the first opportunity the schools at the North and East should be merged with the Centre.

During the year 1894, in compliance with state action, the town provided a flag for the several school rooms and initiated the custom of saluting the flag each morning.

Thus far in its career Acton had taken no official notice of the fact that not all the nights were illuminated by bright moonlight. Certain individuals, to be sure, had installed lamps of their own and main-

The building and grounds were purchased from the town for $126.50 by Mr. S. A. Jones of South Acton.

tained them at personal expense as a civic gesture to the wayfarer. In the town report of March 1884, however, there appears the first recognition of the street lighting problem. Twenty five persons, all residing in what is now known as precinct two, are listed as having been paid two dollars and sixty cents per lamp per year. In addition the Acton Centre Improvement Society maintained fifty one lamps spread all over what is now precinct one, and the West Acton Lighting Association was responsible for thirty six. In toto the town made reimbursements totalling three hundred dollars.

An excellent specimen of these early lamps, now illuminated by electricity, stands in front of the residence of Mr. Irving Duren in the Centre, and another in the yard of Mr. Horace Tuttle.

It was also during the busy decade ending in 1890 that the quarrying in the town began to assume major proportions. For years there had been shallow strip cuttings to supply guide boards, bar posts, paving blocks, and slabs for underpinning. None of these produced in volume because they were two or three man enterprises in general.

Sometime during the year 1882 Mr. David Harris, together with Mr. Timothy Sullivan, while driving down the old road from Graniteville saw a huge boulder that attracted their attention as experienced quarrymen. They secured permission to split the rock and while working on it discovered a ledge of prime granite. As a result, after some exploratory drillings the company of Harris, Prescott and Sullivan came into existance and one of the town's busiest industries thrived for decades. At present, in the personage of Mr. Ray Harris, the youngest of the twelve children of the founder of the project, and his son, the business is going into its third generation. Two or three other sons, as they came to maturity, were also associated with their father or launched out for themselves.

At the end of sixteen years of successful partnership the elder Harris (1851-1936) a native of Wales, bought complete control of the business. In the meantime hundreds of thousands of tons of first grade stone had come out of the great hole where derricks, winches, steam drills, and hand sledges kept a small army of workers busy the year round. Because of its location in an isolated forest many persons in town knew only in a vague way that the quarry existed unless they were reminded of it by the periodic blasting. Down at the finishing sheds there were the signs of activity that could not possibly be ignored. Here there was constant clinking of hammers as master craftsmen wrought in the obdurate stone. On the railway siding there were always flat cars in process of being loaded with curbing, doorsills, monumental blocks, and huge rough stone being shipped untrimmed to far places to be there cut by local workmen for special purposes.

The Harris quarry was distinctive in that in one or two places the ledge had faulted and caused a condition known among geologists by the term "slickensides". This can best be explained to the layman by saying that the stone skin of the earth had cracked, both long and deep, and that during that primeval upheaval the two faces of the fissure, rubbing together under prodigious pressure, had become heated and polished and to some extent chemically metamorphosed as compared with the adjacent rock. In consequence, by careful quarrying, hundreds of slabs could be removed having one face of a distinctive texture and coloring highly prized for decorative purposes. The general effect was that of watered silk in pastel shades of green and cream, which, when properly finishd by skilled workmen, was comparable to choice marble.

Today the plant is completely modernized. The huge derricks are gone, the hand letterers have been replaced by slick methods of sand-blasting, and with much less noise and confusion a large volume of business is still turned out with neatness and dispatch and shipped by truck. What used to be an area covered with railroad tracks, steel cables, and stone chips is now a sort of private park with a picturesque fish pond and facilities for local picnics.

For several years it had been obvious to many that the town should be divided into districts to facilitate voting, particularly for state and national elections. In consequence it was decided at the March meeting of 1892 to lay out convenient precincts. Along with this move went two others of importance, namely, to elect all town officers on a single ballot, and to elect the selectmen, one from each precinct, for terms of three years. There was some opposition but a motion to rescind failed of passage. So the Centre became precinct one, the South precinct two, and the West precinct three as at present. Subsequently the lines were altered a bit to permit John Kelley, at Kelley's Corner, and Sidney Richardson, whose son Paul now lives on the old homestead, to be assigned to precinct three.

At the national election in the autumn of 1892, the first to be held under the precinct system, the results were as follows;

	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3
Democratic Party	59	67	40
Republican Party	83	90	96
Prohibition Party	0	0	12
People's Party	0	2	0

The surprisingly high Democratic vote was undoubtedly due to the high regard of the general electorate for the honesty and ability of Grover Cleveland. Percentagewise the Democratic vote was thirty seven per cent of the total which appears to be a record for the town except in the case of the Bull Moose split of 1912. In this con-

nection it is interesting to note that in the campaign of 1940 the vote was Wilkie 1131, Roosevelt 348 and in 1948 Truman polled 335 to 1219 for Dewey. In the landslide of 1952, with nearly ninety four per cent of the registration appearing at the polls Eisenhower carried the town by 1714 to 355.

In addition to the fire at which Rev. James Fletcher lost his life there was at about the same time another one that may have given the citizens cause to think in terms of modern equipment as it was then understood. The large general store that stood just northeast of the Monument House was operated by a stranger to Acton who, according to some, had been unsuccessful in competition with the old established firm of Emery Taylor. In any event on a wild and windy night Woodman's store burned completely to ashes. It was a perfect night for a spot of arson, if such it was, since there was a howling wind and no rain. Partially burned shingles were carried as far as the Great Road and the whole eastern half of the Centre village was in danger of as great a holocaust as that of Civil War days. By sheer luck no other buildings were close enough to be subjected to the direct heat and what brands lighted on roofs were speedily extinguished.

As a result the town voted in the spring of 1893 the hitherto unprecedented sum of fifteen hundred dollars for fire pumps of the type now only seen at firemen's musters. Despite their crudity they were a vast improvement on anything the community had owned hitherto. With all their shortcomings they were to serve until the arrival of a water system and modern power pumps.

To those readers who cannot recall that era it may be of interest to know just what the sequence of events was in case of fire, at least for the Centre village. The others were not too superior to be of note.

If the fire was somewhat outside the village the distressed home owner either aroused some one in the village by telephone or, failing in that, hitched up his horse to a light wagon and drove pell-mell to the town house, climbed in the window at the right of the entrance (it was always left unlocked) and started ringing the massive and heavy toned bell in the clock tower. On a clear night, with a sturdy ringer, the bell has been heard in Westford and hence it is needless to say that the whole village was immediately aroused. The author's childhood home was scarcely a hundred yards distant and he can still shudder at the recollection of the impressive tones of that old bell bursting forth into the calm of the night as his father dressed and was out of the house before it had clanged more than a few dozen times.

The first farmer that could get a pair of horses hitched to a platform wagon or a hay rigging set out for the town hall. Usually several arrived at about the same time. Numerous others arrived on foot and all repaired to the long, low shed to the rear of the town

hall that housed the pump. Heavy plank lay in the shed to serve as an inclined plane to load the pump on to the transporting vehicle and the several loads of volunteers set forth for the conflagration hoping that no essential accessories had been left behind and that when they arrived at their destination there would be some respectable source of water.

If it was the summer season and everything went favorably it might happen that a stream of water would be playing on the fire in fifteen minutes. If, on the other hand, it was a harsh winter night with the thermometer dallying around ten or more below zero, and the house-owner lived far out of the village, and if the fire house was half submerged by the drifts of a driving blizzard, and if the doors were frozen shut, and if, to cap the list of misfortunes, the valves of the old hand tub were frozen solid, the result was pathetic. The frenzied owner could merely sit around and watch his domicile disappear.

Upon one occasion a barn caught fire in a blinding thunder shower. The volunteers turned out in force but emptied the well in about ten minutes. Fortunately there was a small brook, actually a rill, a few rods away, which normally would not have supplied water rapidly enough for the pump but due to the shower it held up amazingly and the fire was subdued.

Sometimes, even under favorable conditions, a fire right in the village in the daytime could not be handled. Such was the case of the old Barker Cider Mill in South Acton which burst into flame one Sunday morning about 1902. Across the road was a deep water hole, fed by a spring, planned for just such an emergency. But with three engines sucking from it the thousands of gallons it contained were soon exhausted. In the meantime the huge storage tanks on the top floor were opening under the heat and their contents was flowing down the hill and along the gutter on Central Street. Some bright mind conceived the idea of building a dam and pumping cider instead of water. Hence the hot cider went round and round until it was dissipated in steam and all but a small portion of the mill lay in ashes. Anything can happen at a rural fire and from the standpoint of Acton's heavy drinkers that Sabbath morning witnessed the ultimate in pathetic wastefulness.

All this leads up to the fact that within a few years the town began to agitate the revamping of the whole fire fighting system and a committee was authorized to test the various chemical engines on the market. The real solution came with the installation of town water and modern equipment such as is now in use but that day was still far in the future.

In connection with the Acton cider mills some comment should be made. In many parts of the country a cider mill is merely a small

affair that turns out a few hundred gallons of fresh apple juice, from carefully selected fruit, which in some cases is even washed before being ground! The idea is that it will be consumed within a few days as a pleasing drink.

The Acton mills, such as the one operated at South Acton by Mr. Henry Barker and Mr. Fred Burke, the Parker mill, and the one that stood a few rods east of the Kinsley Road and functioned under the aegis of the late James Kinsley until he assumed the office of postmaster, were in reality vinegar factories. These mills turned out thousands of barrels of cider which was stored in huge tanks and eventually shipped to the vinegar dispensing companies.

Under these conditions it was not necessary to be too prissy about the fruit. Any incidental worms or rotten spots were readily taken care of by the acetic acid that soon formed and by the sand filtering. More than one Acton boy of that day dipped into a thousand gallon tank under the presses and drank deep and long, completely nonchalant as to whether the apples coming through the grinder had been readied by some meticulous health officer.

The soft residue pulp that came from the presses was piled outside at the rear of the mill and was hauled away by the farmers as incidental fodder for their cattle. The ox cart of Mr. Frank Pratt was a frequent visitor for this purpose. By one of those not infrequent quirks of usage the pulp was locally known as "pumice", due undoubtedly to its spongy character. It was, of course, a misnomer since the word properly defines a type of lava.

In a season when the fruitage was heavy, a combination of wind and rain could mean thousands of bushels arriving at the mill, at twenty cents a barrel. Wagons loaded to the limit would now and again form a queue a hundred yards long at the Barker mill where Mr. Fred Burke functioned for many years as owner and manager. The mills have all gone, the last being the Barker mill which burned for the second time in 1952 while operating under the name of the J. W. F. Von Lear Co. The ruins, now being slowly torn down piece by piece by a local resident, stand stark and desolate as though mourning for a departed era.

During this year also Mr. Moses Taylor[1] gave to the Library the beautiful oil painting, "THE DEPARTURE OF THE MINUTE

[1] Mr. Moses Taylor owned and operated for many years the farm where Mr. Dunn now lives on Taylor Rd. He held many responsible positions in town affairs and was in 1882 the representative for the towns of Acton, Concord, Littleton, Stow, and Boxborough in the state legislature. When the project for the building of the library was pending Mr. Taylor, rather than have it fail, spent a thousand dollars to have the ground cleared of existing buildings and made ready. A more detailed account of his personal life is given in Fletcher.

MEN", by Acton's leading artist, Mr. Arthur Davis. The Minute company is depicted as leaving the house of its captain, whose wife, standing by the door, is taking a last look at the living form of her husband and the father of her sick children. Mr. Luther Conant, in his report for the Library committee made the following comment:

> *"It has been the aim of Mr. Taylor and the artist Mr. Arthur Davis, to have the representation as nearly historically correct as possible. Fortunate is the town that can furnish alike the donor, the subject, and the artist of so valuable a work."*

The next year Mr. Conant, possibly inspired by the gift of Mr. Taylor, presented to the Library another Davis painting, namely, that of the Acton company leaving for Lowell on the morning of April 19, 1861.

Mr. Davis, who later became Acton's librarian, was a gifted and accomplished artist. He belonged, as one might expect, to the naturalistic school of his era. Scores of canvasses and etchings came from his hands and all of them were meticulous in line and detail. One never had to guess what the painter intended to portray. He had the good fortune a few years before his death to have his extant collection shown in the Concord Library through the kindness and interest of Mr. David Little whose brother designed the Concord public library.

At this same time Mr. Wilde showed his continued interest by making a settlement of five thousand dollars the interest of which was to provide for the purchase of books.

On April 19, 1895 Acton staged one of its greatest celebrations. The occasion fell on the one hundred and twentieth anniversary of Concord Fight but the main reason for the festivities was the dedication of several historic markers appertaining to the Revolution. A prominent participant in the affair was Mr. Reuben Law Reed, for many years the town's inveterate patriot and a walking encyclopedia on Revolutionary data.[1] Although he was not on the committee guiding the events of the day he had long been active in agitating the placing of proper memorials of enduring native granite.[2]

In preparation for the events of the day the committee rented a huge circus tent from a Boston firm and had it erected under the

[1] Mr. Reed was a conspicuous character about the countryside for many years. His shoulder length hair and pontifical demeanor attracted attention wherever he went and he was always on the go. He was an ardent member of the Bunker Hill Historical Society, was perpetually involved in historical researches concerning the Revolution and possessed a staggeringly dependable knowledge thereof.

[2] Committee chosen by the town consisted of E. Faulkner Conant, Chairman, Daniel J. Wetherbee, Isiah Hutchins, John Fletcher, Frank H. Whitcomb, Luther Conant, Augustine Hosmer, Anson C. Piper, Charles J. Williams, Oliver W. Mead.

supervision of Mr. William H. Kingsley at a spot between the town hall and what is now known as Woodbury Lane. Needless to say, the village youth were impressed at the raising of the great supporting masts, which were painted a staggeringly brilliant blue.

The following excerpts from the Boston Journal of April 20, 1895 give a vivid picture of the events of the day.

> *"The little town of Acton, the birthplace of the foremost heroes of both the Revolution and the Civil War, was the scene of the greatest celebration of Patriot's Day, the one hundred and twentieth anniversary of the Concord fight.*
>
> *It was a gala day for the cluster of pretty villages, men, women and children all leaving their homes to attend the fete. Flags and bunting fluttered in the breeze on every hand, the whole town being dressed in its best for the occasion.*
>
> *The day could not have been more perfect. It was as beautiful a morning as ever dawned in the uncertain month of April, and delightful summer zephers fanned the cheek, while a kindly sun bathed the patriotic scene in a golden glow of sunshine. Booming cannon and pealing bells aroused the town at sunrise. The celebration was a complete success, the exercises were carried out without a hitch and all Acton was happy at the result, while the visitors had naught to say but words of unstinted praise.*
>
> *With the arrival of the first train at nine o'clock in the morning, when the stirring music of two bands sounded on the quiet air, the celebration commenced and it was not until the early hours of this morning, when the last strains of the waltz at the grand hall had ceased, and the last dancers sought their homes, that the one hundred and twentieth anniversary of Concord fight was over and Acton rested from her fete.*
>
> *At nine o'clock the first formal exercises of the day began, when Hon. Luther Conant, President of the day, met the committee on arrangements at the railway station to welcome and receive the invited guests and other visitors, who arrived by special train.*
>
> *At sunrise, noon, and sunset the bells pealed and the cannon boomed. During the intervals the bands gave concerts on the common."*

The first of the memorial stones to be dedicated was the one erected near the site of the Captain Joseph Robbins house a hundred yards east of Woodlawn Cemetery. Again quoting from the Boston Journal we learn that

"Conspicuous by the roadside is a big rough boulder with the side facing the highway inscribed

SITE OF HOUSE WHERE FIRST ALARM WAS GIVEN IN ACTON! MORNING OF 19*TH OF APRIL* 1775. *CAPT. ROBBINS! CAPT. ROBBINS! THE REGULARS ARE COMING.*

Hardly a single farm house can be seen from this historic spot. The graven stone stands on the crest of a small hill, while in all directions extend the rough stone walls which mark the boundaries of the pastures and fields.

Rev. Franklin Parker Wood of Acton invoked the divine blessing and Hon. Luther Conant, President of the Day, introduced as one of the older citizens, whose memory of the patriotic days was still fresh, Mr. Moses Taylor, who read an interesting paper in regard to the history of the spot.

The exercises closed with the dedication and prayer by Rev. Edward G. Porter of Dorchester.

From these exercises the company passed to Woodlawn Cemetery where the graves of the Revolutionary dead were marked with small flags set in iron markers that had been installed by the town the year previous. One incident of the services in the cemetery was the reading by Rev. Mr. Wood from the Bible formerly used by Rev. John Swift, Acton's first pastor.

From Woodlawn the company proceeded to the site of the Hosmer house, where through the generosity and interest of Mr. Luke Blanchard was dedicated another native boulder inscribed as follows:

FROM THIS FARM WENT
CALVIN AND LUTHER BLANCHARD
TO CONCORD FIGHT AND BUNKER HILL
SONS OF SIMON BLANCHARD WHO WAS
KILLED AT THE BATTLE OF QUEBEC 1759
LUTHER WAS THE FIRST MAN HIT BY A
BRITISH MUSKET BALL AT THE OLD NORTH
BRIDGE AND DIED IN THE SERVICE OF HIS COUNTRY
A FEW MONTHS LATER

The exercises consisted of an address by Rev. W. R. Buxton, of the South Acton Congregational Church and an historic paper by Hon. Luther Conant.[1] Mr. Conant's remarks are given in detail below.

"With those who interest themselves in the research of

[1] Rev. Buxton's address is given in full in *MEMORIAL TO LUTHER BLANCHARD FIFER OF THE ACTON MINUTE MEN*, page 40. in the Acton Library.

genealogy for the purpose of discovering a distinguished pedigree to boast of, or a coat of arms to emblazon their hearaldry, we have little sympathy.

But when we find a man who is willing to give time and money to ascertain if one of his kindred or ancestors suffered or perished in some great cause, and whose memory and acts are passing into oblivion, because historians have not done justice to his services, at once the act commands our admiration and respect, and we bow to him as a public benefactor.

From this farm went Calvin and Luther Blanchard to Concord Fight and Bunker Hill, sons of Simon Blanchard, who was killed at the battle of Quebec, 1759. *These young men were learning the mason's trade and could not claim Acton as their birthplace, having been born in what is now the town of Boxborough.*

The story of Luther Blanchard, fifer, and Francis Barker, drummer, taking their place at the head of the line, striking up the tune of "The White Cockade" in my early childhood, strongly appealed to my imagination, and I never visit the historic ground without their almost visibly appearing before me. Luther was the first man hit by a British musket ball at the Old North Bridge and went into the house of Humphrey Barrett to have his wound bandaged.

On the 24*th of April, five days after the Concord fight, Luther Blanchard, together with fifteen other members of Captain Davis' company enlisted in Captain William Smith's company of Lincoln, Colonel John Nixon's Regiment, and was at the battle of Bunker Hill. After one hundred and twenty years, through the generosity of one of his kindred, his grandnephew, Mr. Luke Blanchard of Acton, a noble memorial has been erected to his memory.*

This place has now become one of Acton's shrines for on this farm dwelt Abner Hosmer, who was killed with Captain Davis at the Old North Bridge.

The other brother, Calvin, was a member of the Westford company in Colonel William Prescott's Regiment. He was a man of great determination and physical strength, both of which qualities came into great prominence on such a day as the Battle of Bunker Hill. He afterward enlisted in the army that under Arnold made an attempt to capture Quebec in the latter part of 1775, *where his father was killed sixteen years before."*

The exercises were concluded by a dedicatory prayer by Rev. E. I.

Lindh, pastor of the Baptist church at West Acton.

The old house from which Abner Hosmer and Luther Blanchard departed for Concord was demolished many years before the dedication ceremonies but it stood on the very spot later occupied by the dwelling of Mr. Herman Gould and now the residence of Mr. Douglas Granger. It was a large house, upright in front, with a lean-to roof on the back. It had two rooms in front, with an entry between. A large chimney was midway of the house. The back chambers were low and unfinished.

Deacon Jonathan Hosmer, father of Abner, was the first settler on the farm. Nathan Davis Hosmer, grandson of Jonathan, built the dweling house now standing and was the last Hosmer to own the property.

The next focus of attention was the Acton Common where the renowned Salem Cadet Band of that period, under the direction of Mr. Jean M. Missud, entertained the guests who had been assembling for the later exercises.

At the conclusion of the concert the committee repaired to the homesite of Capt. Isaac Davis for the dedication of a third granite marker inscribed as follows:

THIS FARM WAS THE HOME
OF CAPT. ISAAC DAVIS
WHO WAS KILLED IN BATTLE
BY THE BRITISH AT
THE OLD NORTH BRIDGE
IN CONCORD, APRIL 19TH
1775.

Upon their return there was a military parade by the Old Sixth Massachusetts Regiment and the G. A. R. Posts.

At twelve forty five a reception was extended to Governor Frederick Greenhalge which was immediately followed by a sumptuous collation in the town hall. Acton's genial and capable caterer of those days, Mr. A. Lucien Noyes, Proprietor of the Monument House, served the meal to all who cared to attend.

At two o'clock the speaking of the afternoon took place in the tent. The day was so fine that the sides were rolled up and fully a third of the huge crowd stood outside in the sunshine. One paragraph of the governor's speech may here be recorded as indicative of its whole tenor.

> *"It was the citizen soldier — the Minute Man — who sprang to his arms at one o'clock on the morning of April 19th, 1775, on Lexington Common. It was the citizen soldier Isaac Davis of Acton, who kissed his baby in the cradle for the last time, and threw his arms lovingly, for the last time,*

around the neck of his devoted wife Hannah on that morning, and who led his company to Concord Bridge, to give his life that liberty might live. It was the wife of a citizen soldier, Hannah Davis, who powdered the hair of the thirty five men in her husband's company on that morning, that they might meet the hated red-coats as gentlemen."

At the conclusion of the speaking the band obliged with another concert until the major portion of the huge concourse dispersed.

Two of the most honored guests of the day were Luke Smith and James Edwards, whose respective fathers Solomon Smith and Ebenezer Edwards were at Concord Fight. It had long been supposed that Luke Smith was alone in that particular but diligent research brought to light Mr. Edwards, neither a native of nor a resident of Acton, but able and willing to make the effort to be present at the exercises. Luke Smith was eighty two at the time, having been born on Washington's birthday in the year 1813. He was founder of the Bunker Hill Historical Society and its first president. His last appearance was in 1898 when he planted a "Liberty Tree" on Bunker Hill under the auspices of the city government with Mayor Quincey presiding.

A twenty five page souvenir program, containing many pictures and much interesting data was issued, several of which are in the hands of persons now living in the town. Among other things the program gives pictures and information concerning prominent citizens of the period some of which will be outlined here.

Mr. Luther Conant, president of the day, had served as selectman and on other official boards of the town. He was a member of the legislature in 1866 and 1886 and had, up to 1895, presided at one hundred and twelve town meetings. Capt. Aaron C. Handley was captain of Co. E, Sixth Massachusetts Volunteers for nine months. He represented Acton in the lower house in 1855, 1863, 1889 and 1890. Moses Taylor represented the town in the lower house in 1882. He was for several years captain of the Davis Guards and was in 1895 the senior member of the Board of Trustees of the Memorial Library. John Fletcher represented Acton in the lower house in 1861 and in the Senate in 1870-71. He was for twenty years chorister of the Congregational Church and had been president of the Schubert Choral Union since its organization in 1869. He lived in the house now owned by Dana Hinckley and during his lifetime it was a show place of the Centre because of the numerous evergreen trees clipped into unique and interesting shapes that covered the extensive lawn. Mr. George C. Wright represented the district in the lower house in 1874. Mr. Luke Blanchard, donor of the memorial stone at the Hosmer homestead, was a native of Boxborough but lived most of his life in West Acton where he directed a large

and prosperous business in the handling of produce both for the Boston market and for export. Col. Winthrop E. Faulkner was eminent locally as a soldier, musician, and citizen in public life. He was state senator in 1853-54 and was an early projector of the Fitchburg Railroad and a director for many years.

The Schubert Choral Union mentioned above originated with the Peace Jubilee in 1869 in Boston when a huge choir drawn from many New England towns participated. So many enjoyed the contacts made that a group composed of voices from Acton, Harvard, Pepperell, Lancaster, Maynard, Stow, Littleton and Lincoln met each year on the 17th of June for an all day music festival in Acton town hall. Under the direction of John Fletcher or George Gardner the morning was spent in rendering the Jubilee songs for the entertainment of the performers and the general public. In the afternoon the singers were the guests at the home of Mr. Fletcher. The group consisted of one hundred and thirty persons and the organization personnel consisted of John Fletcher of Acton, President; James Blake of Pepperell, T. B. Wheeler of Harvard, George Johnson of Lancaster, Vice-Presidents; H. E. Cutter of Acton, Secretary; George Gardner of West Acton, Choral Director.

Mr. Horace Tuttle recalls that once Mrs. Elizabeth Taylor Sanders, sister of Mr. Emery Taylor, sang a whole Messiah solo in competition with a terrific thunderstorm. Mrs. Charles Smith adds the information that the girls of her high school class once served in the capacity of waitresses at the collation.

In June of 1895 the first class to complete the full four year course was graduated from the high school.[1] Upon this occasion the graduates, for the first time, were spared the experience of delivering orations and essays en-masse. Instead the address of the evening was given by Mr. Eben Davis, a native of Acton and superintendent of schools of Chelsea.[2] In a long discourse he made the observation that in his youth there was no high school other than a sort of tutoring class kept in the Centre for a few weeks in the fall by some college student who desired to eke out his expenses. There was no orderly course of study. Each student selected the branches his fancy dictated and paid tuition accordingly.

It seems fitting to list below those persons who were the first to complete the four year course at the Acton High School.

[1] Thursday, June 14th.

[2] The complete address appears in the town report printed in February of 1896.

English Course	Classical Course
Augustine Bradford Conant	Eva Clarissa Bassett
Ethel Viola Handley	Ina Stella Bryant
Carl Pickens	Mary Edwards
James Quinlan	John Edward Hannon
Loretta Centenna Shattuck	Alice Emma Miller
Carrie Elizabeth Taylor	Mabel Francis Wetherbee
Grace Evelyn Taylor	Sarah Alice Wood
Lulu Florence Whitcomb	

With the March meeting of 1895 Mr. William D. Tuttle relinquished to his son Horace F. Tuttle the office of town clerk which he had held continuously since 1854, thereby terminating the first era of what is in all probability a family record for all New England. Born in Acton in 1825 Mr. Tuttle came up through the local schools as an attentive and diligent scholar and assumed the office at the age of thirty because he had already established a reputation as a man of sobriety, temperance in word and deed, and a surpassing capacity for attention to detail. Added to this was the paramount virtue of keeping to himself the affairs of the town and of the individuals who had reason to consult him concerning personal matters. He was respected as a successful farmer and as a substantial citizen of sound judgement and impartial decisions as a consequence of which he was elected to the legislature for the session of 1856. Throughout his life he was a staunch pillar of the Congregational Church, serving it as deacon and general advisor. He was one of the original trustees of the Memorial Library and served for many years as secretary and selector of books.

But this is only the beginning of the story. Mr. Horace Tuttle who assumed the office in 1895 was a man of similar type who held and deserved like esteem. After graduating from the Lawrence Academy in Groton he worked with his father on the farm homestead and became the surveyor for the countryside. At the age of thirty, as did his father, he assumed the duties of town clerk. He was for many years deacon of the Congregational Church, member of the cemetery committee, and in 1932 was elected to the legislature at which time he polled in Acton the highly complimentary vote of 1001 to 175.[1] In 1941, after forty six years of service, he in turn was succeeded by his son Harlan, who, when he is re-elected in March of 1954 will have rounded out a full century of the Tuttle dynasty.

[1] The Hoover-Roosevelt vote in the same election was 938 to 281. The general attitude of the electorate is reflectd in the fact that when, upon one occasion, some aspirant for the office of town clerk polled a mere handful of votes, a local wag put him to the question in the presence of the daily post office assemblage by asking if he intended to demand a recount.

Acton is fortunate that party politics have played no part in its selection of town officers. It is true that the three Tuttles mentioned above were Republicans but that has no bearing upon the matter. The dynasty has endured because the several individuals were devoted and able public servants.

It was at this time that the town initiated the office of inspector of cattle. Moses A. Reed was selected for the position. He was an almost certain choice for the office since he had for years conducted a combination farming and slaughtering business on the old Reed farm where Mr. Rimback now resides. The slaughter house is still in use as a sort of garage and store house. Mr. Reed also served the town as an unofficial veterinarian, constable, overseer of the poor, and performed other civic duties with ability and distinction.

It was during this era, when horse drawn vehicles still served for short haul transportation, that the residents outside the railway villages were accomodated by delivery wagons of all sorts, now a thing of the past. The old fashioned white topped butcher's wagon or the bakery cart are today museum pieces so rapidly has rural merchandizing been transformed in half a century.

As the Victorian age approached its end the butcher carts of Mr. Stirling Moore of South Acton, or of Mr. Waldo Whitcomb, and Mr. Ellis Harlow of West Acton traversed the remoter areas of the town every few days. The standard regalia of the butcher was a long dark blue frock, woven straw wrist guards, and a large apron which was initially white at the start of the tour. Since this was the era of the ten hour day when the carpenters, the plumbers, the painters and the factory help were on the job at seven in the morning, the average housewife had her breakfast out of the way by six thirty and saw nothing untoward if the butcher made his call any time thereafter. Regardless of weather he came on the allotted day and not only was he a purveyor of fats and protein foods but also, in a time when rural telephone service was in its infancy, a bringer of news, a general conversationalist and a carrier of messages both oral and written to other neighbors on his route.

The whole rear of the meat wagon could be raised to form a sort of inclined roof and in pleasant summer weather a half dozen customers might foregather simultaneously in an informal convention while the patient butcher cut or sawed or weighed. In the biting days of winter the picture was vastly different. Business was transacted indoors while the stolid horse, with frosty breath congealing on his nostrils wore a blanket in the harshest weather and hoped for the day long trek to be over. It was not unheard of to hang a lighted lantern within the cart to keep the meat from freezing.

All that has been said of the butcher also applied for the fish man,

the bakers cart, the laundry man and the tin peddler. This latter character, however, was in a slightly different category in that he was engaged primarily in barter rather than straight sales. From his cartload of heterogeneous metalware he would trade for rags, bottles, paper and what-not. The chief local representative of the guild was a retiring and kindly cripple named Ernest Woodman who hobbled about town for years. His home and center of activity was in the eastward end of the house on Main Street now occupied by Alexander Emerson.

Another interesting specimen of the age was an old Scotchman named McIntyre who periodically drove out from Lowell with an assortment of wearing apparell. He was an inveterate conversationalist, never in a hurry, and never directly concerned, apparently, about making a sale.

In addition there was the ladder man, the hulled corn man, the tea man, the pack peddler, the clock and umbrella tinker, the fruit man and last, and in reality least, tiny Gus Flecther, a peppy little individual weighing about a hundred pounds who drove the delivery wagon for the Maynard laundry.

The heyday of the patent medicine sharper and the spectacle salesman with his ready made window glass merchandise was on the wane. The peripatetic book agent, however, was still going strong but his nemesis, the movie, was a newborn and lusty competitor that was soon to spell his doom.

On May 2, 1896 six young ladies, Miss Laura Brown, Mrs. Charlotte S. Blanchard, Miss Mary Franz Rich (Mrs. F. C. Nash), Miss Albertine Preston (Mrs. Hobart Mead); Miss Henrietta Cutler (Mrs. Raymond Dodge); Miss Henrietta Clark (Mrs. Andrew J. Torsleff) and Miss Hattie Davis(Mrs. Hattie Harris) met to consider the advisability of forming a Women's Club, decided in the affirmative, and drew up a constitution and by-laws. Within a fortnight Mrs. Eugene Hall, Mrs. John Hoar, and Mrs. Charles Stone had joined the group and the following officers were elected: President, Laura Brown, who served for nineteen years; Vice-President Mrs. Arthur Blanchard; Secretary, Miss Henrietta Cutler.

Meetings were held at the homes of the club members. The first club marriage was that of Miss Albertine Preston to Mr. Hobart Mead. The first club baby was a daughter born to Mrs. Ida MacGregor.

In April of 1915 Miss Brown retired and was elected honorary president and Mrs. Blanchard honorary vice-president, she having retired in 1912 after sixteen years of service.

In a letter to the president, Mrs. Henry L. Hayes, dated Sept. 23, 1925, three public spirited citizens, George V. Mead, George C.

Wright and Arthur F. Blanchard, having purchased the property of the first Universalist Society of West Acton, offered to deed the property, land, building and contents, free and clear of all encumberances and without expense to the club contingent upon its acceptance and incorporation.

The incorporation took place November 10, 1925 at which time the club received an additional gift of fifteen hundred dollars from the original donors.

In 1928 the bronze tablet that at present appears over the main entrance of the Club building was given by Mr. Arthur F. Blanchard and Mr. George V. Mead.

During the decade just previous to 1900 there began stirrings in several directions along lines of civic improvement. Not all of these came to early fruition but evidence of a working leaven were obvious. The desire for a modernized water supply was a case in point. Isolated individuals had cried in vain now and then but the era of the pump, the roof-water cistern, and the open well, although on its last legs, was by no means ended. Even the die-hards, however, had reached the point where they were willing to concede that cranking up the old oaken bucket on a biting February dawn had become a questionable pleasure. Those who were affluent enough or sufficiently forehanded to have a rainwater cistern in the cellar felt very smug about their beautiful soft water suds on wash day but no amount of complaisancy could ignore the omnipresent tank attached to the cook stove. Neither could it eliminate the annual chore of spending a whole day to dip out the gallons of slime that had accumulated through the months.

Upon occasion a group of volunteers, for a bit of fun and a serving of more or less potent refreshments, would drag out the old hand pump fire engine, and do the initial emptying. This technique caused some eyebrow raising now and then among the more virulent temperance group but to the casual observer all hands had a good time and in the attendant horseplay usually received a somewhat compensating baptism of sorts.

It had been assumed by the general public that if and when Acton installed town water Lake Nagog would be the logical source of supply. To that end a committee was chosen to protect the interests of the town since there were rumors that Concord was casting a yearning eye in that direction.

In April of 1895 a committee consisting of William D. Tuttle, Delette H. Hall, Francis Conant, Hanson A. Littlefield and Daniel J. Wetherbee was appointed to employ competent engineers and investigate the possible sources of water and the most feasible location for a standpipe. Nagog Hill, although the highest point in town by a

few feet, was not favorably located from the standpoint of requisite piping. Great Hill was the obvious choice and it would provide, with the stand-pipe envisioned, pressures of 138 pounds at East Acton, 86 pounds at the Centre, 111 pounds at South Acton and 100 pounds in the West village.

Test drilling started in June of 1895. Numerous wells, forty two in fact, were sunk all up and down the valley of Fort Pond Brook but without satisfactory success. Finally persistence paid off on the land of Isaac Reed about a quarter of a mile west of Wright's Hill in West Acton on a swamp area that geologically has all the earmarks of having been in some far distant age an open lake. This is substantiated by the fact that at depths of from twenty to forty feet excellent water was found whereas at lower strata quick sand was sucked up in quantity.

On December 17, 1895 a special town meeting was held to hear the results of the survey and to ascertain whether a committee should be chosen to secure the necessary legislation to install a water system. An affirmative vote was passed and then, after considerable argument, a motion to rescind prevailed. The one great spectre that seemed to overawe the minds of the opposition was ledges. Acton is full of ledges and it appeared to many that no financial estimate on piping cost would be worth the paper it was on, and they had no intention to go into the thing on a gamble. During the progress of the debate Mr. Frank Hayward of Whitman and Mr. Fuller, the engineer, were called upon to address the meeting and at the conclusion of their remarks a motion to choose the aforementioned committee failed by a vote of 132 to 126.

Thus Acton's first serious attempt was abortive but the size of the minority vote presaged eventual action. For several years the matter lay officially dormant but always in the minds of forward looking citizens in West Acton there lay the thought that just at their doors, so to speak, lay excellent water in plentiful volume with Wright's Hill immediately at hand as a possible disbursing point. In the meantime Great Hill was not escaping the notice of South Acton residents. In consequence on April 16, 1912 the act of incorporation was accepted and Edgar H. Hall, Charles W. Fairbanks, and Waldo E. Whitcomb began to function as commissioners with Charles H. Mead as clerk.

Additional trial wells were put down and eventually twenty permanent wells, each two and a half inches in diameter, were installed. On June twenty fourth the pumping test started with most encouraging results. A three hundred gallon pump on a test extending from June 24th to July 1st averaged 272 gallons per minute. The water level in the wells sunk twenty five inches in the first six hours and then

levelled off at the end of one hundred and sixty one hours to a point where seventeen additional hours of pumping depressed the level but one half inch.

In 1913 the Centre came into the system and on May 22, 1914 the commissioners decided to accept a contract with the town at the rate of twenty five dollars per hydrant per year for fire service. The same contract is in force today. The old original small wells have now served their time and have been replaced by two new sixty inch wells that appear to be able to provide for any probable demand in the predictable future.

With the introduction of plenteous water, with ample school facilities in the immediate offing, and with a new super-highway crossing the town the community is due for a tremendous transformation. It will be a handier place of abode but not necessarily a better place. The older residents must reconcile themselves to the fact that the days of the tiny, isolated, rural township are gone forever. Once upon a time twenty five miles from Boston meant seclusion. Once upon a time the breadth of an ocean also meant seclusion for America. Those days are gone for better or worse and mourning over the past cannot solve the problem. A realistic and frontal attack is the only present alternative.

Of the original board of commissioners only Mr. Waldo Whitcomb is still living. After long years of conscientious and excellent service he, now in his eighty ninth year, after stating that he had recently resigned, asserted drily that "he had been on the board long enough".

As of 1952 there were one thousand house installations, one hundred and seventy four hydrants, and twenty two miles of water main.

Pursuant of the preceding discussion of the water works it may be of interest to the curious to inject here some data as to the elevations above sea level of various parts of Acton. According to the official government survey the figures in feet are as follows:

Nagog Hill 380, Great Hill 370, Strawberry Hill 335, Faulkner Hill 321, Wright Hill 311, Nehemish Hill 311, Acton Centre at Junction of Concord St. and Wood Lane 268, Grassy Pond 235, Nagog Pond 226, South Acton Railroad Bridge 219, West Acton at junction of Summer and Willow Sts. 216, Faulkner Mill Pond 192, junction of Pope Rd. and Great Rd. 140, sinking Pond 137, Barker's Pond 135, Fort Pond Brook at point where it flows under Laws Brook Rd. 132.

Consequently the highest point in Acton is the top of Nagog Hill and the lowest is, by deduction, the point where Fort Pond Brook (or Laws Brook) crosses the Acton-Concord line, which is almost exactly where Massachusetts Ave. crosses the New Haven Railroad.

At a town meeting held on April 5, 1897 the long mooted question

of what to do with the outlying schools came to a head. It was voted that if a proper person could be found who would transport the children from the East District to the Centre at a cost not to exceed ten dollars per week the move would be made and the East school discontinued. Mr. Jens Mekkelsen, one of the early Scandinavian settlers in Acton, was awarded the contract and for many years thereafter his kindly smile, gentle manner, and voluminous whiskers were well known to all the school children of precinct one. His school barge was so arranged that in midwinter the wheels could be replaced by runners, and it was a constant source of interest to the youngsters as to just when the transition would take place. His big bay horses were powerful and willing, a fortunate circumstance in view of the fact that his route lay over some back roads where frequently the drifts were untouched when he made his morning trip. This was long before the day of the truck, the snowplow, or the bulldozer, and many a time the snow shovel he carried with him was his only means of progress in the face of a biting blizzard.

The East School that was closed at this time stood on the hilltop on the east side of the Great Road about fifty rods south of its junction with Strawberry Hill Road.

During this year Miss Viola Tuttle took over the office of Librarian and together with Mr. Arthur Davis, Rev. Franklin P. Wood, Mrs. Lyman Tuttle (nee Ida Hale, the first librarian) and Mrs. Frank Fiske prepared and published the first catalog. The project was under the general direction of Mr. William D. Tuttle, Secretary of the Board of Trustees. In a letter dated in February 1952 Mr. Davis asserts that this system was based on the one then used in the Boston Public Library. Some fifteen years later,[1] when Mr. Davis was librarian, the decimal system was installed under his direction, with the help of four assistants, one of whom was Mr. Leonard White[2] then a student at Dartmouth.

Early in the library history distribution branches were established at West and South Acton and large boxes of books were transported by carriage to the various readers.

At about this time also the long and hectic argument as to what was to be done about the high school became more acute. Acton had passed the point where it embraced more than five hundred families and in consequence was being crowded by statutes of the Commonwealth as well as by progressive citizens. At a special meeting held in June of 1896 the school committee reported in favor

[1] In 1912 to be exact.

[2] At present professor of political science at the University of Chicago. Professor White, a native of North Acton and son of Mrs. Sidney White, has become a noted authority on government and is the author of some score or more of outstanding volumes.

of the purchase of a tract of land of about one and a quarter acres at the rear of the South School, and of the erection of an addition to the building which should provide upon the lower floor accomodations for an Intermediate school and on the upper floor recitation rooms and a laboratory for the use of the High School. The price of the land was quoted as six hundred dollars and the cost of the addition to the building was estimated by Mr. John Hoar of West Acton, who drew the plans, as two thousand two hundred and fifty dollars. The report was laid upon the table.

The above action was due in part no doubt to the fact that the town had purchased land that same year for the enlargement of the West school yard and was also in the process of installing central heating in the school houses of the three main villages. In this connection it is of interest to note that two years later, in 1898, an article appeared in the town warant for the building of a high school at Kelley's corner, where it now is, but the idea received no support of importance.

At the beginning of the winter term of 1897 an Intermediate school was established at West Acton having fifteen scholars with Miss Alzora Jacobs in charge. Previous to this the Grammar school teacher had been forced to govern forty four scholars as well as impart the subject matter for grades V, VI, VII, and VIII. Under the new dispensation the primary school consisted of grades I, II, III, the intermediate school of grades IV, V, VI, and the grammar school of grades VII and VIII.

It was during the winter of 1897 that the only drowning on record at Grassy Pond took place. To most Acton folk this sheet of water of 113 acres, surrounded by swamp and brush, appears only as a likely bailiwick for husky snakes and swarms of mosquitos. It can be readily approached at only one part of the shore where for a few rods one can fish for pouts of a summer evening. Actually grassy pond is the last remains of what was once a glacial lake. Through the ages it has slowly been encroached upon by the shore weeds and will at some far distant period disappear according to the well known geological cycle of such ponds. The swampy area now used for the Acton dump is an example of the same thing in a much more advanced stage of development.

During the winter mentioned Mr. Lyman Robbins, brother of Mr. Herbert Robbins, went two days before Christmas to do some fishing through the ice. He lived on Hammond Street in the house now occupied by Mr. Edward Winslow and it was but a short walk through the woods to the pond. When he failed to return by late afternoon his sister Clara, with whom he lived, hastened to the shore and could see an ominous hole in the ice. By the time she could get the neighbors informed and a rescue party to the scene it was full

dark. The ice was new and reasonably strong but not by any means sufficient to sustain any considerable number, in fact not even two could safely stand side by side. Hence the whole party went over the hill to Nagog and brought back on their collective shoulders a row boat. Despite the fact that it was a cold winter night it was no easy task to carry such a load a half a mile and the men were reeking with sweat when the craft was set in the water and the solemn business began of breaking a channel out to the scene of the drowning. Mr. Simon Taylor was in the bow and was the one who made contact with the body by means of a long boat hook. It was hastily laid upon a ladder that had been brought along and taken to the house about midnight. The rescuers then hastened to their homes to take care of their own health which had been seriously endangered by the experiences of the night.

If one may be allowed to digress momentarily to consider items of a lighter nature one may take account of the fact that during this same year the maintenance of the town pump reached the considerable total of forty two dollars and eighty four cents. The present generation never saw the old hewn stone horse trough and the pump that stood exactly opposite the monument on the north side of Main Street. They served animal and man with water such as the town never tastes today. The old well was very deeply cut into the native ledge and on the hottest summer day one could not drink a whole dipperful without stopping from time to time to permit the throat muscles an opportunity to recover from the chill. It tested at forty eight degrees which compares very favorably with most of the modern refrigerators. The old trough was cut from a solid granite block. When filled it contained somewhat over a barrel of water. On the front were the letters H. C. L denoting Helen Cowdrey Little, the donor, and the date 1886. She was the daughter of Dr. Harris Cowdrey and Abigail Davis. Dr. Cowdrey died in 1869. After the death of her father Mrs. Little lived in the Cowdrey home (now the home of the Misses Torrey and Lincoln) until 1886 in which year both she and her mother deceased. She was a lady of education and refinement and gave the trough because her father so often watered his horse at the old town pump. In 1916 the town voted that it be "moved to some place where it can be used". No one today seems to be aware of its whereabouts but however obscure its present resting place it must still bear the initials H. C. L. and show some signs of the fact that it served the town for thirty years.

At this time the district tie-up with Sturbridge and West Brookfield was dissolved by mutual consent. Mr. Edward Dixon terminated his incumbency as superintendent and remained with the Worcester County towns. Acton entered into a much more workable arrange-

ment with Westford and Littleton and Mr. Andrew S. Thompson, an alumnus of Brown University, assumed the office of superintendent.

In most of the military crises of the nation, Acton has had a strange penchant for taking action in April. Hence it was quite in line with this custom that at a town meeting convened on April 4, 1898 the following resolution, presented by Mr. Charles J. Williams of East Acton, Chairman of the School Committee, should be transmitted to President Mckinley by the moderator of the meeting, Mr. Luther Conant.

> *"Resolved, That the wise, patriotic and conservative foreign policy of the President of the United States has won our admiration and receives our hearty support. We believe that the honor and interests of this nation, and the best interests of the people of Cuba, are safe in his care.*
>
> *By the citizens of Acton, in Massachusetts, this fourth day of April* 1898, *in their annual town meeting assembled."*

Harsh experience has taught our nation through the years since that vote was taken that the Spanish War was a small affair but be that as it may the men who enlisted from Acton took a solder's risk that cannot be discounted because of the restricted area in which the contest took place or because, in the light of later conflicts which none could then envision, the numbers engaged were trivial. Wherever bullets, disease, and exposure are all in the days work the soldier puts his life in the balance for the service of his country.

On a red granite memorial stone on Acton Common appear the following names of those who enlisted for the conflict.

William Dusseault, Chaplain 6th Reg., Arthur Knowlton, George A. Forrest, Robert Maines, William H. Hill, Thomas J. Manion, Charles H. Whitney, Walter A. Tuttle, Fred L. Tuttle, Herbert W. Owen, Hanie S. Greenough, Oliver D. Wood, Clarence Dusseault.

William Rodway, a resident of Acton, enlisted with a Boston regiment and hence does not appear on the memorial stone. He died in the service and was buried in Acton.

The dedicatory exercises were held in 1912 under the direction of a committee on which Mr. Oliver D. Wood took a prominent part. There was a scripture reading by Rev. Edward C. Hayes of the Congregational Church. Exercises by the children of veterans under the direction of Mrs. Augustine Hosmer, a foreword by Rev. Franklin P. Wood, an address by Charles K. Darling, major of the 6th regiment in the Spanish American War and remarks by Rev. L. B. McDonald of Concord who visited the soldiers in Puerto Rico.

Despite the fact that the town fathers were at loggerheads several forward steps were taken in school matters. In compliance with a statute of the Commonwealth the high school year was extended to forty weeks. Simultaneously Intermediate schools were established

at the South and Centre and a ninth grade was added to all three grammar schools. In order to effect these changes additional space was required. Central Hall was rented in South Acton and fitted up to serve as a makeshift grammar school.[1] It was on the second floor of the building housing the tailor shop of Mr. James McGreen and was just about everything that a schoolroom should not be. It was practically on top of the railroad depot and perpetually immersed in the smoke and noise of a busy freight yard. There was no outside area for a play yard. In the winter the stove heat was inadequate so the children sat in their outer clothing the greater part of the time. In the spring and fall if the windows were raised for ventilation the desks were promptly covered with locomotive cinders. All that could be said for it was that it was a shelter of sorts from the elements.

At the Centre the situation was less acute. The front room on the second floor, which had long been used as a repository for school supplies and an office for the school board, was remodelled to accomodate the grammar grades and another supply depot was obtained by renting from Mr. A. L. Noyes sufficient space in his barn and erecting the necessary partitions.[2]

As a by-product of these changes the North School was discontinued and merged with the Centre. The transportation of the new contingent was awarded to Mr. George Greenough who at that time lived directly opposite the school in the house now occupied by Mr. Justason. The North school building is still standing on Harris St. It was purchased from the town and remodelled as a two family dwelling.

As now rearranged the town had its elementary schools centralized in the three larger villages with a primary, intermediate and grammar division in each, and each with three grades.

As a matter of record and reference the list of teachers under the new dispensation is given below.

School	*Teacher*	*Enrollment*
South Grammar	Eva Barton	20
South Intermediate	Eva M. Brewer	27
South Primary	Annie B. Chase	48
Centre Grammar	Sara G. Small	22
Centre Intermediate	Ella L. Miller	38
Centre Primary	Cora E. Warren	33
West Grammar	Mary A. Randall	25
West Intermediate	Catherine Sweeney	22
West Primary	Harriet H. Gardner	33
High School	Walter DeVault	
	Florence Fletcher	31

[1] The second floor of the present South Acton Post Office Building.
[2] The barn just to the rear of the present office of Mr. Boatman.

In December of 1899 Acton High School started its second attempt to launch a school paper. It was named THE HIGH SCHOOL MONITOR and had objectives similar to those of the ACTONIAN of 1893.

During the year the town appointed Miss Marian Brown of Littleton as its first teacher of public school music. She was a personable and refined young lady who was generous enough to state in her annual report that while she found the scholars more or less deficient in the rudiments of music a large portion had good voices. For public consumption that was a very pleasing statement but it glossed over some submerged facts. Certain of the children did respond with enthusiasm but most of the boys regarded it as a silly business. Those in the change of voice stage fell into two distinct groups. The bashful contingent clammed up in abysmal silence. A coterie of extroverts, however, out of pure cussedness, put forth amain and produced a fearsome and wonderful cacophony. These were the same imps, of course, who, half a dozen years previous, in the lower grades, rapidly discovered to their glee that they were possessed of the Satanic gift of knowing inherently the proper angle at which to hold a slate pencil in order that it should emit the most appalling screech and set on edge the teeth of all their neighbors. The foremost of these ardent spirits were given special attention by the local teachers in consequence of which Miss Brown could state in her report that she had received their fullest cooperation. Fortunately she was absent when some of the minor facets of that cooperation were being implemented.

Despite this luke-warm viewpoint the better pupils came in time to occupy places of value in the village choirs. Even certain of the recalcitrants did their bit as organ pumpers. There are citizens walking the streets of Acton today who belonged to that vanished guild and have every right to membership in a waggish group known as the American Association of Organ Pumpers who meet once a year for a banquet where they relive old days under the aegis of their headman and toastmaster who functions under the clever and sonorous title of Grand Diapason.

A pipe organ builder and still active expert of the old school poses the interesting query as to whether, by an ironical turn of circumstance, he is or is not eligible to belong to the fellowship just described. Although he never pumped an hour in a church service he is willing to wager that he has expended ten times as much energy on the job as any of them due to the fact that in his youth the apprentices in the organ factory where he learned his craft put in whole days on end pumping the organs that were being readied for installation.

This same gentleman relates how a scandal of minor proportions

occured in a Boston church when a wisp of smoke emerged one morning from the rear of the organ during the service. Fearing a holocaust the authorities started an investigation only to learn that the pumper was having a bit of a drag on his pipe.

He likewise exclaims at the number of names and examples of pseudo art that he has found carved into the organ panels during his long experience, executed beyond a doubt when the pumper was assumed to be benefitting from the sermon.

In February of 1899 the town voted to join with the Fitchburg Railroad in petitioning the Superior Court for the abolition of the hazardous grade crossings at South Acton. Only those old enough to remember can appreciate the conditions preceding the erection of the present bridge and station. The existing business section of the South Village is not a thing of beauty but it is a vast improvement upon the distant past.

Formerly there was a grade crossing at the lumber yard which took its share of the travel but the main traffic artery was the road to Maynard which pitched down a steep grade at the point where the fire house now sets. It crossed the series of tracks of both the main line and the Marlboro Branch and then, dodging between the saw mill and the bicycle shop on the left and the railroad ice house on the right, passed over the narrow bridge practically on top of the mill dam and climbed upward to join the highway as it lies today.

The present Post Office building stands as it did then but between it and the tracks there was a depot, a freight house, a large combination residence and business block that housed a barber shop, a lunch room, a dental office, and certain other offices from time to time. There was also a dwelling house, and to the west of that another building which although not a round house in the usual sense was a shelter for two locomotives. All of these buildings were old, dingy, soot laden, and none too well kept up. The whole arrangement was not only a depressing sight for the newly arrived stranger but was a deathtrap as well for the users of the highway.

In spite of the conditions nothing tangible came of this laudable attempt to improve the situation. The public mind had to wait until the death of Mr. Percy Tuttle brought the facts into sharper focus several years later.

Nevertheless civic consciousness was not wholly static since in the same year the general improvement of the town Common was attacked with vigor. At that time the monument was surrounded by a fence having huge granite posts about a foot square between which were suspended heavy iron chains. Woodbury Lane continued straight across the present greensward until it joined Concord Street in front of the fire house. In addition, as one approached Main Street, Wood-

bury Lane fanned out on either hand, one branch passing around the corner of the Town Hall and the other cutting to the right around the Stevens Hayward House.

A committee consisting of Luther Conant, William D. Tuttle, E. Faulkner Conant, William Kingsley and Julian Tuttle had the matter in charge and they with others brought about the present pleasing landscaping, secured and placed the two 1812 cannon, and chose the resting place for the stone upon which Capt. Isaac Davis fell, presented by the town of Concord.

The setting of the shapely and beautiful tree that stands in the triangle opposite the firehouse, designated at the Peace Tree at the time of its planting, was a part of the improvement project. It was placed in position with appropriate exercises by the scholars of the Grammar School accompanied by a prayer and brief comments by Rev. Franklin P. Wood. Mrs. Ormond Greenwood, formerly Miss Martha Taylor, at that time one of the school children, recalls assisting her father Mr. S. Hammond Taylor, fill in the top soil after the departure of the witnesses to the event.

As one drives through the village of East Acton the old mail wagon that stands in front of the residence of the late Mr. Michael Hayes is certain to attract the eye. This is no synthetic symbol of unknown origin but is in truth a bona-fide relic of Acton's first rural delivery route and was the inspiration back of Mr. Christy's decision to name his present establishment the Mail Coach Grille.

Rural Free Delivery became an actuality in the United States in 1896. Three years later Mr. Hayes started running the route out of West Concord Post Office and continued until forced to resign because of age limitation in 1934.

During the horse and buggy days Mr. Hayes was a carriage painter by trade, built the body of the mail wagon and lettered it and used it until he graduated to the automobile stage.

It has been previously pointed out that a few abortive attempts had been made to bring about the erection of a high school building. In the spring of 1899 the matter really began to brew. An article to build, location unspecified, failed by 81 to 54. Another article seeking to build an addition to the South schoolhouse also failed by 109 to 73.

As a result of this impasse a second meeting was held on April 17th. A motion to build a new high school at a cost not to exceed seven thousand dollars on the outskirts of Acton Centre on the land owned by James B. Tuttle (known as the peach orchard site)[1] prevailed by a vote of 127 to 116. A committee was chosen for this

[1] The peach orchard site is now the built up section between the little frog pond at the junction of Main St. and Hayward Rd. and the residence of the late Murray Brown.

purpose but its make-up is unimportant since the opposition obtained sufficient signatures to convene another meeting on May 8th at which time a vote to reconsider prevailed. Thereupon a motion was put seeking whether the town would build anywhere in the township limits but it was short lived since a counter motion to dismiss prevailed.

All this backing and filling was due primarily to the fact that in each village there were sufficient die-hards who, unless the school were located in their village would have none at all. It must be recalled that automobile transportation was not yet available and that some of the old animosities left over from the bounty fight were still alive.

As a result, in part, of this situation, Principal Charles resigned and Mr. Walter A. DeVault took his place. Mr. DeVault was not desirous of continuing and resigned at the end of the year. Mr. Archer L. Faxon who succeeded him was a competent and forceful man. Under his regime the one session school day was inaugurated and the student publication, the HIGH SCHOOL MONITOR, previously mentioned, thrived for a time.

During this period also the north school was closed and absorbed at the Centre.

The concept of the horseless carriage goes back some four hundred and fifty years to that great scientific seer and artist Leonardo da Vinci, whose voluminous notes on numberless devices have astounded engineers for ages. In the United States the steamers and the gas cars emerged almost simultaneously. For a time inventors were nonplussed as to which type was the most hopeful to pursue but eventually the gas engine seemed to best solve the fuel problem. In 1893 the gas car invented by the brothers Charles and Frank Duryea became at least a laboratory fact. Production manufacture was still in the future. The United States records show that there were four cars registered in 1895, sixteen in 1896, ninety in 1897, and eight thousand in 1900.

According to the recollection of Dr. Wendell Davis and Mrs. Charles Smith the first car to be owned by an Actonite was a steamer purchased jointly by Mr. Charles Smith and his brother Albert. Mrs. Smith does not recall the make but it is certain that it was not a Stanley and that the date was not later than 1903.

In the era marking the close of the nineteenth century Woodlawn Cemetery, although better kept than many rural burying grounds, presented some features which, although picturesque, have been eliminated for the better. The upper entrance, at the junction of Concord Road and Hosmer St., consisted of two granite posts with an old fashioned swinging gate. The opening was just wide enough for the carriages of that day. On either side stood several huge white pines. On the little plane just inside the gate there were ancient hemlocks that almost wholly obscured some of the tombstones. At twilight it was an eerie and somber place. Now and then a lot would have on it a cast iron settee, usually painted white, of elaborate grillwork depicting sheaves of wheat, wreaths, and calla lillies, the function of which was to provide a place where the bereaved could sit and cogitate upon the departed. Rumor has it that upon occasion there were certain maladjusted individuals who indulged in this pastime at least every Sunday, if not oftener, except in the prohibitive weather of mid-winter.

In the old portion of the cemetery, and extending all the way to the present east wall, ground pink and sand violets grew by the acre and lady's slipper thrived among the pines along the bank of the Rocky Guzzle. In the blooming season it was a sight to behold.

Nevertheless, the Acton youngster, while contemplating these beauties of nature could not avoid noticing the melancholy epitaphs that thrust themselves upon his consciousness and agitated his night thoughts. Three of these samples of tombstone literature, here given, were not likely to put verve and sparkle into his eye.

Josiah Hayward died May 6, 1783 at the age of seventy six and left this admonition for survivors:

Whoever you be that see my hearse,
Take notice of and learn this verse,
For by it you may understand,
You have not time at your command.

James Fletcher was killed December 9, 1815 by the falling of a tree, and the family felt that the following was apropos:

The rising morning don't assure
That we shall end the day,
For death stands ready at the door
To snatch our lives away.

Another victim, name undecipherable, has his demise summed up in these words:

I was sore sick, nigh unto death,
Physicians were in vain,
Until the good Lord pitied me
And eased me from my pain.

Concerning its location in Acton the writer is ignorant but surely somewhere the following epitaph should abide. It was popular in the era and has been found in diverse forms in many states.

Pause my friend as you pass by,
As you are now so once was I.
As I am now so you shall be,
Prepare for death and follow me.

Legend has it that some skeptical wag, undoubtedly well acquainted with the deceased, added the following to a monument in one burying ground:

To follow you I'm not content
Until I know which way you went.

In some cases it appears certain that the sentiments expressed were prepared in advance by the deceased. One cannot forego the notion, however, that the stonecutters of that bygone age, inspired by the monotonous cadence of the hammer and chisel, permitted their subconscious minds to indulge in flights of rhyme and had in readiness an assortment of drab quatrains to submit upon request.

We must not relinquish the topic of human mortality without pointing out that while our early forebears knew they could not win against the grim reaper they did have recourse to means of tempering his victory. A representative of one of Acton's most prominent families volunteered the following bill for incidental funeral expenses submitted by the widow after the death of her husband in December of 1803.

10 Gals. Medford Rum	L	3	.	8	.	4
2 do Brandy		-		16		-
1 Qt. Gin		-		2		-
2 lumps sugar 15½ lbs.		1	.	3	.	3
3½ lbs Rice				1	.	6
¼ lb. Hyson Tea, 1 lb. Coffee				4	.	6
	L	5	.	15	.	7

HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF ACTON

PART VI

1900 - 1950

Throughout its modern career Acton has been, with rare exceptions, dry on the liquor question. With Maynard so readily available it was considered a good idea to keep the town officially arid. Even the heavy drinkers among the substantial citizens concurred in the opinion. This bent of the public mind resulted in dry majorities previous to 1900. Three times during the 1880's the wet contingent polled not a single vote, the greatest debacle being a defeat of 148 to 0 in 1884.

In 1900, however, those of the wet persuasion did a rare bit of spade work and scored a near miss of 86 to 89. According to the drys the town had lost its self respect if not its soul. In consequence the vote of the next year was a rousing NAY by 186 to 136. Thereafter placidity reigned until 1907 and 1908 when the wets prevailed by squeeky margins and then proceded to score a knockout blow in 1910 by 193 to 174.

Thereafter prohibition became the law of the land and the wet vote failed to recover even after the amendment was repealed. In one election only eleven "YES" votes were cast. With the arrival of the automobile as a common carrier the sale of liquor in Acton became more or less academic. Even the confirmed drinkers preferred to enjoy a sort of pseudo virtue by driving to Maynard or Concord.

With the arrival of the modern package store, however, the town slowly lapsed in its teetotal convictions and now countenances their existence. The 1952 vote was 1323 to 540.

Throughout the era of these battles it must not be assumed, however, that all was harmony and rectitude. It was sometimes inferred among the elite that only the riff-raff, the drummer trade, and the railway laborers patronized the two or three suspected sub-rosa dispenseries, but this view was not one that could be defended with profound conviction. The various town officers, being human, varied in their allegiance to their duties upon occasion and were not above giving warning of an intended swoop by the authorities. Now and then, however, a raid would be staged that was a bonafide surprise, in which event most anything could happen, as for instance the case when the former American House in South Acton was taken completly unawares by an enforcement group sufficiently ardent and so lacking in gallantry as to haul out of bed a decidedly irate and verbose female along with some three dozen bottles of hard liquor.

Upon another occasion the proprietor of a different hostelry felt grievously abused when the officers, having unearthed a considerable cache in a pile of stable manure, forced him to wash it thoroughly and then polish the bottles in order that the evidence might be presented in its pristine beauty at the district court in Concord.

The next item, although having no connection with the foregoing seems worthy of mention in view of the light it throws upon the changing scene. So long have we lived in a war economy where wages are high and no man who is willing needs to seek a job that the facts of 1900 jar us a bit. In that year four hundred and seventy tramps were housed and fed at the town farm. By securing a permit from the town clerk they could find shelter for the night in a bunk house built for the purpose. The fare was not abundant, it consisted of crackers and water, and in addition they were made to do a modest stint of work on the woodpile before being fed.

In 1901 several firsts were added to Acton's lengthening list of civic responsibilities. Mr. Charles J. Williams was made tree warden and his first annual report states that with the able assistance of W. F. Stevens and Moses A. Reed the beautiful trees on the Common and along the highway by Woodlawn Cemetery had been properly preserved. In closing he made the request that a definite appropriation be envisaged in perpetuity in order that one of the town's crowning distinctions be not lost by neglect.

This Mr. Williams was a colorful character who deserves a bit of special mention, particularly since in the same year he was placed on the newly formed Board of Health. He was a bachelor of excellent education, determined mind, and sufficient private income to live in complete independence. For years he served on the school committee and for a time was post master at East Acton where he resided with his mother, likewise a peppery citizen with a local reputation. Mr. Williams was interested in Acton and, situated as he was, filled his several offices with distinction, caring not a whit whose toes were pinched so long as the town business was transacted with economy and dispatch.

Consequently when he and Dr. Frank Barker and Dr. Frank Tasker became Acton's first Board of Health no great time elapsed before the fur began to fly. First off 277 school children were vaccinated for small pox. Immediately thereafter certain more or less nonchalant citizens began to find that their elementary notions of refuse disposal were about to get them into trouble. Dr. Barker was an up and coming physician and surgeon with small time or patience for the unsick hypochondriac. In a poor laborer's home, on a kitchen table by the light of a small kerosene lamp at midnight, he once performed an emergency operation for gall stones on an

eighty year old woman with such success that she enjoyed several years of good health. Courage and energy were characteristic of the man. Hence it is not surprising to record that certain townspeople not overly concerned about the personal cleanliness of their offspring were one day amazed to see them arrive home with heads shaved as smooth as the proverbial billiard ball in consequence of the good doctor's vendetta against head lice.

Still another innovation was the passing of an ordinance making official the practice of perpetual care in the town cemeteries. This idea was first begun in a desultory way in 1890. Simultaneously it was decided that in addition to the markers identifying the soldiers of the War of the Revolution and the War of the Rebellion additional distinctive markers should be set for those who participated in the War of 1812, the Seminole War and the Mexican War.

Lastly, in this year of many innovations, the town took over the street lighting and hired lamplighters for the several villages.[1] Each was supplied with a fifty gallon tank for the storage of kerosene, two sets of lamps (of copper or tin) in order that they might be alternated from night to night, and a charge account at the local stores for wicks and chimneys. The empties were filled with sufficient oil, depending upon the season of the year, so that the light would burn out just before dawn. On the naive basis that half the nights of each month were moonlight the lamplighter was engaged to supply illumination only for the sixteen nights during the "dark of the moon". If rains prevailed in the off period and it was dark as pitch those who ventured out had to make the best of it. If the lamplighter had no horse he used a hand cart or a sled according to the season and carried a six foot ladder to reach the taller lamps. Now and then the glass of the outside casings would crack or work loose so that in rainy, blustery weather the hot chimneys would break and the burning lamp would soot up the interior to the thickness of half an inch in the course of a night. In the winter washing with water was out of the question. If the reader thinks ice is difficult to handle let him try manipulating barehanded a wet kerosene rag at twenty below zero in a gale. The remuneration was between fifty cents and a dollar per night depending upon the number of lamps. The author, speaking from several years experience, can assert with feeling that the job was no sinecure from November to April.

Early in 1902 Mr. Alvin Lothrop, a native of South Acton who had become successful as a merchant in the nation's capitol, noticed on one of his visits to the old home the almost primitive way in which the

[1] The first corps of lamplighters consisted of Fred Green at West Acton, Charles Brodeur at South Acton, Benjamin Ineson at the Centre and Michael Hayes at East Acton. In the case of eight outlying citizens the town made reimbursement at the rate of $3.50 per year.

local roads were being built and as a result offered to contribute immediately a thousand dollars towards a stone crusher. As a consequence of this gift and others which supplemented it Acton installed the crusher on the site of the present home of Mr. Robert Stow and purchased a steam roller in addition. With this machinery, an unlimited supply of old stone walls and loose boulders that could be obtained gratis, together with the integrity, know-how, and industry of its three road commissioners, Mr. William H. Kingsley, Mr. Anson C. Piper, and Mr. Albert H. Perkins, the town soon had excellent water bound macadam highways long before any neighboring communities of comparable size.

Mr. Lothrop was born July 3, 1847 in the old homestead now occupied by his niece, Miss Mary Lothrop. It is a point to be noted that he was one of four in his school class who made for themselves a place in the world, namely, Sophia Faulkner, Corinna Shattuck, and George White, all of whom are mentioned in detail elsewhere.

Mr. Lothrop began his mature career under the tutelage of Mr. J. K. W. Wetherbee in the store of Tuttle, Jones and Wetherbee. In due course he went to Boston where he met S. Walter Woodward and established both a freindship and a partnership that lasted throughout his life. The company of Woodward and Lothrop had several locations in and about Boston, the last being in Chelsea whence it moved to Washington D. C. in 1880. The business grew apace and expanded into its present huge quarters at 10th, 11th, F and G Streets. Mr. Lothrop died in 1912 but the grandchildren have established their competence to successfully conduct the large enterprise. There are several large branches, the latest addition having been opened in Alexandria in 1952.

Mr. Lothrop never lost touch with his home town. He loved to return and look over its rolling acres as he sat on a stone wall with some former school mate and chatted of the days gone by. It was ever a joy to him to have Actonites drop in at the Washington store. His sunny disposition was a blessing since his wife's illness and the death of a daughter threw the cares of home, as well as business, upon him with full force.

An article in the warrant for the same year brings back some interesting memories for the older generation. It was voted to appropriate one hundred dollars for four band concerts in each village, to be given by the ACTON CADET BAND, a group of some twenty or more musicians of amateur ability but surpassing willingness and vigor. Due to the activities of the Improvement Societies each village already had a band stand as an adjunct to the occasional lawn parties that were held during the summer season. The one at the South Village was much more ornate. It had a fancy roof and was painted tan with

brown trimmings. It stood at a point almost exactly half way between the present post office and the residence of Mr. George Greenough. The other two were less ambitious and were painted green with a white trim and had no roof. Their positions cannot be mentioned with precision since they might appear almost anywhere on Halloween or the Fourth of July, depending upon the size and maturity of the group engaged in the rollicking. With arrival of the motor car and the radio tastes have changed, the band no longer exists and the bandstands have vanished into the limbo of things that used to be.

When the voters of Acton convened for the annual meeting on March 31, 1902 they made the usual choice of Mr. Luther Conant as moderator, as they had done with very rare exceptions since 1861. Mr. Conant, then seventy one years old, respectfully declined the duty he had performed so long, whereupon the town passed unanimously the following resolution:

> *"We, the citizens of Acton, Mass., in town meeting assembled this thirty first day of March* 1902, *do hereby sincerely express our regret at the proposed retirement of Mr. Luther Conant from the office of presiding officer of our Town meetings, which office he has so ably held for more than forty years. We fully realize our debt of gratitude to him for his faithful service, and it is with profound regret that we learn of his intention to retire therefrom. We heartily assure him of our esteem and appreciation of his self sacrificing devotion to the town's best interest, also, his ever ready willingness and careful attention to all the manifold duties of presiding officer and his fair and impartial decisions. We earnestly request that he reconsider his intention and continue to serve us in this capacity. We feel that should he adhere to his present intentions and retire as planned, the Town will be the loser to an extent we cannot at present estimate. With this feeling in mind we again with all the force of entreaty at our command request that he may continue to endow the town with his faithful service. In accord with these wishes we heartily and cordially thank him for the great service rendered the town and assure him of our most heartfelt wishes for a long continuance of his long and successful life. We hereby direct that a copy of these resolutions be suitably framed and presented to him."*

In its further deliberations that same day the town passed the following vote:

> *"Voted, that the town of Acton present to Luther Conant as a token of appreciation of, and in partial payment to him for, his long and faithful service to the town as the Presiding*

Officer of its town meetings, a watch, that said watch be suitably engraved and presented to him by a committee of three selected at its annual meeting March 31, 1902.

"That the sum of one hundred and fifty dollars be hereby appropriated for the payment of the same."

The committee chosen to make the presentation consisted of Charles M. Kimball, Frank C. Hayward, and Jona K. W. Wetherbee. Mr. Kimball also served as moderator for the meeting.

When these events took place Mr. Conant felt that the time had come for a younger man to fill his place. The town's wish that he live much longer was fully realized since he still had some twenty years before him and was privileged to be alert to the end.[1]

With the cessation of his activities as moderator Mr. Conant became one of the small coterie of men beginning with Jonathan Billings and Francis Faulkner who spent the major portion of a long life in one town office while functioning without stint in numerous other capacities. His unquenchable interest in Acton, together with his sound judgement, commanding presence, and forensic ability, made him a natural choice as the town's spokesman upon public occasions of major import. His terms in the legislature in 1866 and 1886, and his selection as emissary to the statehouse in diverse connections were an inevitable consequence of his civic stature.

One industry that thrived for a time and provided employment for a score or more was the morocco shop at South Acton, sometimes dubbed the "skin shop" by the more casual. It was built in 1892 by Elnathan Jones on a site between the now obsolete turntable and round house and the mill pond and was operated by his son-in-law Mr. Charles Kimball. The output consisted largely of high grade soft leathers during the era when such material was in demand for footwear.

Eventually the market changed with the public taste so that in 1908 the building was taken over by Mr. Byron Moore and a partner named Burgess for the manufacture of webbing. Mr. Burgess died in 1913 and in 1915 Mr. Lowell Cram assumed his place. In 1917 the business moved to more adequate quarters at West Concord where it now operates successfully with some thirty workers as the Moore and Cram Webbing Company.

Part of the old building in South Acton was sold locally and removed. The remainder was torn down and the lumber, bricks and windows were taken by various persons to build new houses.

In 1902 Miss Viola Tuttle, who because of ill health had been assisted by Miss Flora Reed as town librarian, resigned, and Mr. Arthur Davis was selected by the trustees to fill the position. Both

[1] He was born in Acton June 4, 1831 and died there November 13, 1922.

by temperament and ability Mr. Davis was peculiarly qualified for the work and with his installation there began another of those long term public services that are characteristic of the town — for he continued to function until the close of the year 1944, thus completing forty two years as Acton's Librarian.

Some men make contributions to civic life in business, some in politics, some in the clergy, and some as teachers or farmers or musicians. The reputation of Mr. Davis as a painter has been mentioned in other connections, but quite aside from that phase of his life there is another outstanding feature of the man. Through several decades this unassuming bachelor kept the homestead (now remodelled and owned by Irving Duren) neat and attractive, did his own housework and maintained a garden that was the envy of his neighbors. Notwithstanding his many duties he appeared hither and yon over the countryside putting on canvas the local scenes that appealed to his artistic soul. Until the last months of his life he was still alert and interested in the march of events and in the history of Acton and was kind enough to supply certain obscure data well nigh impossible to obtain from any other source.

Mr. Davis was born in Roxbury, Mass. on March 27, 1863, attended the public schools there and came to Acton with his parents in 1875. During the winter of 1883 he worked in the office of the C. F. Hovey Company in Boston, where, through the influence of their European buyer, Mr. Mandell he joined the Christian Union of Boston. Later he worked with his cousin in Malden and studied painting with Mr. A. H. Bicknell who had a studio there. From this contact he later lived with a relative of the painter, Mr. Frank Bicknell, on a vacant farm in East Woburn. He returned to Acton in 1887 for a time and then, together with Frank Bicknell, shared a studio on East 14th Street in New York City where for two years he made water colors and etchings for various publishers. Then, as now, the path of the artist was not one of affluence so he returned to Acton and sold water colors through the Walter Kimball Company of Boston.

In his picture of the Davis Company starting for Concord he has successfully attained his objective both historically and emotionally. On the one hand he conveyed the spirit that imbued the marching men and on the other adhered to the tradition that the morning was unusually mild and the trees were in full leaf.

In his larger picture portraying the departure of the Acton men in 1861 he inserted the Fletcher house and barn as they then stood next to the meeting house of 1807. The setting of the vehicles and the arrangement of the other details were the result of continued interviews with soldiers who were present on that morning.

During his long tenure Mr. Davis was ever gracious and affable

with a keen sense of humor, and an avid and encyclopedic familiarity with Actonaria.

In his early years as librarian he installed a catalog system based upon that in use at the Boston Public Library but in due course this was superseded by the Dewey method as as been previously pointed out. About 1904 he built an extensive shelf system in the attic to accomodate the lesser used books, which were, however, as carefully catalogued as the others. Shortly afterward additional shelves were introduced into the alcoves as at present. Sometime in the discernable future the library must have an addition, particularly as the town shows every evidence of considerable growth within the next generation.

In Arthur Davis the town of Acton has had an example of the impact that can be made upon a community by a man of honesty, simplicity, modesty and industry — even though he may be unaware of the fact that any impact was being made. It was not given to him to be a famous artist, as the term is usually understood, but his Isaac Davis picture is known wherever historians assemble who know the details of Concord Fight and he did have the satisfaction, as has been previously mentioned, of seeing his numerous canvasses exhibited locally in the Concord library.

As he approached his ninetieth birthday in a rest home he continued to put out an amazing number of creditable water colors and pencil sketches as a pastime and as a means of taking his mind from the perpetual pains that tortured his frail and wasting body.

His sketch of the second meeting house, done by request, in a matter of a few days, less than four months before his death, is more pleasing and softer in effect than the harsher woodcut used by Fletcher. Moreover it is a treasured sample of the last public effort of Acton's unassuming and loyal artist.

He was one of a small group of painters who restricted their canvasses to one town or to a single small area. For that reason he is unique and for that reason Mr. David Little has seen fit to stage another Davis exhibit in the Concord library during the past summer.

The changing scene is nowise more vividly emphasized than in the passing of certain interesting characters whose counterparts no longer exist. One who flourished at the turn of the century was Simeon Green, the octogenarian dancing master. He resided in Harvard but at intervals he would conduct, on Saturday afternoons during the winter, a series of twelve lessons in ballroom dancing. The season was topped off with an evening ball with dance orders, a grand march, and an orchestra, and all this for the now unbelieveable stipend of three dollars per pupil.

The clientele was restricted to juveniles and over these the bearded

but spritely protagonist of Terpsichore ruled with absolute sway as he unveiled the techniques of the waltz, the caprice, the shottische, the Lancer's quadrille, and the minuet. There was never a lost moment and woe betide the young gallant who jay-walked across the floor to make his addresses to a prospective partner. The old maestro would collar him forthwith and in front of all assembled give him a lesson in etiquette that was bound to stick. Under the aegis of Simeon Green the dance was a refined experience in the enjoyment of rythm and polite social intercourse. The grand old dancing master had the good fortune to die before the decline of good taste to the level of the black bottom and the other various off-shoots of jungle voodooism that eventually became popular.

A second bright spot in the Acton picture of the era was the personage of its inimitable auctioneer, Otis H. Forbush, whose duplicate could not be found in the whole Commonwealth. Presumably he was a shrewd and successful live stock trader who spent much of his time at the Brighton market. In the spring and fall his droves of cattle, as was the custom in those days, could be seen on the Great Road between Acton and New Hampshire where they went for summer pasturage. In his earlier years he resided with his first wife, the former Nettie Cummings, on the farm for many years owned by Mr. Murray Brown and now the home of Mr. Richard Morrison.

In the general neighborhood of 1900 he moved to the Centre and purchased as a focal point for his enterprises the property now owned by Mrs. Lucy Bean. The barn was small and consequently the cattle went in and out with amazing dispatch. When, as a boy, the author went there for the nightly milk ration, he was forever nonplussed at being unable to get acquainted with the cows as individuals. For an animal to remain any length of time was an event. Sometimes the combination orchard and barnyard at the rear was heavily populated for several days or a fortnight but inevitably the stock moved on northward or to Brighton.

All this, however, is beside the point. Mr. Forbush's avocation was auctioneering, a field in which he was particularly gifted. Picture if you will a tall, lean Yankee with firey red hair and whiskers, immaculately dressed wearing a linen duster and gloves to keep himself so, abounding in energy and possessing a limitless and tumultuous vocabulary, a bubbling sense of humor, and showmanship par-excellence. Much of this ability was honestly inherited from his father, Luther Forbush, mentioned in the preface. Although lacking some of the rapid fire fluency of his son the sire was a true eccentric of the old school with no inhibitions that were ever discernable. The son enjoyed every minute of an auction and was proud of the fact that in all his years of officiating throughout the state he never

missed a sale on the date advertised.

If Forbush's name appeared on an auction bill the people appeared in droves, not only to buy but to attend what was sure to be high grade entertainment. The tension never eased while he was on the podium. If for any reason some untoward incident momentarily distracted the crowd he would emit a piercing tooth whistle that brought the attention back where it belonged. Then, with sly quips, he would once more have the show on the road. The buyers came for miles and brought their lunches in order not to miss any of the fun.. Sometimes at a two or three day sale other auctioneers would fill in for a season while he ate or rested. The let down was so terrific that it was pathetic.

One of his tricks at near by auctions never failed to create amusement. In the hinterland near the junction of Acton, Stow, and Boxborough there dwelt in those days the locality's only negro, a character named Jim Chester. He was omnipresent for reasons presently to be made obvious. He was the first on hand in the morning with his hay rigging and the last to leave at night. Often he never bid but nevertheless went home with all the waggon would hold. If any article of questionable value dragged at all it was quickly "sold to Jim Chester for two cents" or some equally ridiculous sum, although the old colored man had not opened his mouth. Upon one ocasion he was present at a sale where two large barns and a house were filled with the accumulations of a life long auction fiend. In mid afternoon of the second day there was put up a barrel filled with heterogenous pills and patent medicines, some of which were fifty years old. When no bid was forthcoming in about ten seconds Chester had the lot knocked off to him for three cents. Heaven only knows what disposal the old boy made of the contents but he acquired a passable barrel anyway.

Mr. Forbush's second wife, and widow, now resident in West Concord where this dynamic gentleman spent his last years, was the attractive and talented soprano soloist, Elizabeth Taylor, daughter of Mr. Silas Hammond Taylor and grand-daughter of Mr. Moses Taylor.

Mention of Mr. Hammond Taylor brings to mind that he lived during his latter years in a house in Acton Centre, no longer in existence, that was interesting in both its architecture and its associations. It stood in the vacant area between the house of Mr. Fred Joyce and the drive leading up to the residence of Mr. Carl Olsen.

Its precise origin seems to be lost in obscurity but from Mr. Horace Tuttle and others the writer has been able to cull the conviction that sometime previous to 1860 it was either built, or more probably moved there, by Mr. Moses Taylor at the same time that the house of

Mr. Joyce was moved. The names of Thomas Green, Fessenden Jones, Benjamin Skinner, Frank Lund, Orzando Davis, and Reuben Reed are mentioned as one time occupants. In addition Mr. Luke Smith is reported to have had a wheelwright shop there shortly after the Civil War.

The two owners just previous to Mr. Taylor were a Mr. Chamberlin and Mr. Elijah Ball. This latter gentleman operated a large bakery in Cambridge and sought the house as a summer place for his three sons, one of whom, Arthur, now deceased, went to California and became a successful experimenter in connection with technicolor motion pictures.

At some stage in its career the house had a piazza attached, with floor area greater than that of the building proper, part of which had a second story so arranged at the end nearest the street that by going up two steps one emerged upon a railed platform a couple of yards square which perched upon the limbs of a massive red maple. During the Chamberlin regime, presumably, there was built a bowling alley, which was subsequently removed to the approaches of Great Hill and transformed into a dwelling, and also an aviary for rare and colorful birds. The village youth would now and again be invited to view the birds and even glimpse the bowlers but were too awed by all this affluence to even hope for a chance to try their hand at the sport.

Mr. Chamberlin had a relative, a nephew most probably, who, certainly during the months of his summer sojourn, was by long odds the town's biggest man. He stood generously above six feet and seemed almost as broad as he was tall. He was in the five hundred pound class with plenty to spare as he attained full stature and even astonished the local tailor when, emerging into his early teens, he was presented for a suit measurement tipping the scales in the neighborhood of the two hundred and fifty mark. It was an eye-full for the youthful patriots to witness Ralph Perry manhandle the old town house bell in the grey of a Fourth of July dawn. It was upon these occasions, provided the wind had a gentle northward drift, that its booming tones could be heard on Westford common.

It was this same house, previous to the era of the Chamberlins, that was the scene of Acton's last full blown charivari. Just what made this affair very special is confused after the lapse of the years. The two main personalities, together with their eccentricities, if any, are lost in the fog of the past. Concerning the nature of the occasion, however, there is no doubt. In modern argot it was a "wing-ding". This was no coterie of a dozen genteel friends who were shortly to be made welcome and served with previously readied refreshments. This was a contingent of a score or more of stalwarts bent on a ruckus

and accoutered for the purpose, not only with the customary tin pans and horns, but with diverse items of light artillery among which shot guns were of the lesser sort. The word had been passed about beforehand and half a hundred spectators were present to enjoy the balmy summer moonlight and the attendant bedlam.

Since there was no inclination on the part of the bride or the groom to make an appearance the din waxed long and furious, particularly since during the rare and brief silent intervals the couple could be heard in heated argument.

With the arrival of the automobile and the cinema the charivari as a means of entertainment passed into gradual oblivion but none of the few later ones ever approached this in scope and virtuosity.

During the year 1903 the town began to bestir itself in the long overdue matter of fire protection by purchasing a hand drawn chemical for West Acton and erecting an adequate building for housing it and the accessories. Before the purchase was made the youth of the village were hugely entertained by the tests that were made on hastily erected shacks well covered with kerosene. The old firehouse is still in service although the modern fire truck which came in with the installation of town water is a far cry from the initial occupant.[1]

Although of minor historical import it is a fact that in 1903 the high school had its first uniformed baseball team. Previously there were games upon rare occasions but there were no uniforms and no schedule.

It happened in 1903 that although the school had less than a score of boys enrolled several of them were outstanding ball players, including a battery par excellence in the persons of Clayton Beach and Harold Littlefield, each of whom were of professional league calibre. With this nucleus the boys bustled about town and raised a complete outfit by public subscription. The suits were navy blue with heavily padded pants, as were then the style, and zebra stockings ringed navy and white.

The whole younger generation waited with interest and trepidation for the report of the first game, played at Lexington, and learned with amazement and joy that the local team had been victorious by a score of 8 to 6.[2] Through that year and the next Littlefield pitched himself to renown, and, by the aid of the mighty bats of Beach, Bixby, Norris, and Stillman, continued to defeat the opposition with

[1] For a picture of the original building see page 32 of the town report of March 1904.

[2] A photograph of the team of 1903, in the possession of Mrs. Charles Smith, shows the following players: Harold Norris, 3rd base; George Stillman, outfield; Carl Hoar, outfield; Edward Bixby, short-stop; Ralph Piper, 2nd base; William Edwards, 1st base; Clayton Beach, catcher; Harold Littlefield, pitcher; Richard Kinsley, outfield.

surprising regularity. If the modern generation desires two records to emulate let them regard the following with proper respect. On Aprill 22, 1905 Littlefield pitched a 6 - 0 shut out against Littleton at the old trotting park grounds in Littleton and in the process racked up twenty two strikeouts. On May 10th following, at Hudson, Littlefield and Ralph Piper pitched a 26 - 4 victory which was called at the seventh inning by mutual agreement.

During this period Old Home Weeks became fashionable, one day of which was set apart for the climactic celebration. Acton chose July 21, 1905, the one hundred and seventieth anniversary of the first town meeting at which the first selectmen and other officers were chosen.[2] Since all such affairs follow a pattern it will be sufficient to note only that there was a huge collation at which 1800 were seated; the Acton Cadet Band under the direction of Mr. Frank Merriam performed with its usual ability; the invocation was made by Rev. Frederick Brooks Noyes of Scituate who was born and reared in the house now owned by Howard Billings; and the oration of the day was made by Hon. Luther Conant. Mr. Conant was at that time seventy four and this was his last public address of consequence.

As the horse-and-buggy age drew to its close — while the automobile was still a novelty — New England went through the electric car era. Rural hamlets that never had heard a locomotive whistle resounded twenty four hours a day to the clanking of gongs and the screaming of brakes. Lines by the dozen were incorporated and streamed all over eastern Massachusetts. Among these was one that came to Concord via Arlington Heights, Lexington and Bedford and gave rise to Lexington Park, an amusement Mecca that thrived for upwards of two decades.

The nature of man is such that Concord could not long remain a terminus and in consequence the Concord, Maynard and Hudson line began operations in September of 1901. Acton minds thereupon set to work with the result that on March 31, 1902 the selectmen signed the franchise for the Lowell, Acton and Maynard Street Railway with the written understanding that the work would be completed by September of 1903. The plan envisioned a route through the three Acton villages and thence via Carlisle to the already established line to Chelmsford Centre. Things did not develop as expected and as a result it was finally agreed that the dead line should be extended to December 1, 1904.

In those days the old highway crossed Fort Pond Brook right at

[1] The author takes issue with the commonly accepted idea that Acton was incorporated July 21, 1735. The petition for incorporation was presented to the General Court on June 30, 1735. On July 3, 1735 the act of incorporation was passed and signed by Governor Belcher. It is the author's contention that the town was incorporated on July 3rd and that the formal organization of the government took place on July 21st.

the dam of Faulkner's Mills, passed the old saw mill and the bicycle shop of Harry Clough, and made a crossing of the tracks of the Marlboro Branch all within a distance of a dozen rods. It was here that the South Acton terminus of the line was located for several years.

In 1906 the present bridge was built to eliminate the wide and dangerous grade crossing and with that change the rails of the electric line were laid up the bridge approach to a point just short of the smaller bridge over the tracks of the Branch.

During the next three years work progressed slowly on the link to West Acton which had its terminus at the junction of Kinsley Road and Massachusetts Ave. In September of 1909 that segment of the line opened for regular traffic but still the rails did not cross the main bridge at South Acton. Passengers had to travel the fifty yard gap on foot until its eventual closure on June 23, 1910.

All this while Acton Centre remained a sort of oasis of static life, surrounded at discrete distances by raucus railroads and clanking electric lines. Beauty, cleanliness, and a sense of historical propriety are indubitable virtues but there were times when it seemed to the scholars who had to walk to high school through winter slush and chill as if the march of progress had a devilish aversion for the quiet little village.

By 1911 it became apparent that the completion of the line to Lowell was a vain hope and the selectmen signed an approval for the consolidation of the Concord, Maynard and Hudson and the Lowell, Acton and Maynard.

As the years went by the automobile became the major method of conveyance. The electric lines hung on for a while but finally went into receivership and formally gave up the ghost after a devastating sleet storm in the latter part of November 1921. The track and road bed were dismantled in 1923.

Aside from its various industries Acton has been through the years a busy dairy and fruit farm town. A natural outgrowth of that fact was the organization of a local branch of the Grange. This movement was led by Mr. James B. Tuttle, son of Capt. Daniel Tuttle of Civil War fame, and owner of the farm now operated by Mr. Liebfried. Mr. Tuttle's activities came to fruition with the organizing of Acton Grange No. 259 on March 15, 1906 with himself as Worthy Master and seventy eight charter members. Mr. Tuttle deservedly retained the position of Master for several years due to the fact that he was tremendously interested, had a powerful voice and a good presence, was a capable parliamentarian, and was a tireless worker for correct ritual.

For reasons not now known the list of the original officers has dis-

appeared. Fortunately, with the assistance of several of the charter members, the complete staff has been recalled and is given herewith.

Worthy Master	James B. Tuttle
Worthy Overseer	Edwin A. Phalen
Worthy Secretary	Mrs. Louisa N. Wood
Worthy Treasurer	Lyman C. Taylor
Worthy Lecturer	Mrs. Josie Pinkham
Worthy Chaplain	Rev. Thomas Miles
Worthy Steward	Ormond Greenwood
Worthy Asst. Steward	Oliver D. Wood
Worthy Lady Asst. Steward	Ella L. Miller
Worthy Flora	Ethel Thompson (Mrs. Benjamin King)
Worthy Pomona	Una Holden (Mrs. Leonard White)
Worthy Ceres	Marion Taylor (Mrs. William Trefren)

Executive Committee
J. Sidney White
Leonard Pinkham
Rev. Franklin P. Wood

In February of 1907 there was in the state house at Boston a presentation of historical canes to Governor Curtis Guild and Col. J. Payson Bradley, Dept. Commander of the Massachusetts G. A. R. Upon this occasion Capt. Charles T. Ripley, Chief of Police of the Boston Navy Yard made a valuable contribution to the patriotic record of Acton by presenting a poem highly eulogistic of the services of Capt. Isaac Davis on April 19th, 1775.

In recognition of this event a resolution presented by Mr. Reuben Law Reed, as given below, was passed at the annual town meeting of March 25, 1907.

> *"Resolved by the citizens of Acton, in town meeting assembled, on this, the twenty fifth day of March,* 1907, *that we put on record our appreciation of Capt. Ripley's sentiments contributed upon the above mentioned occasion, and that they are especially appreciated by us as coming from the pen of one who did signal service on land and sea in the war for the preservation of the Union, for the establishment of which Capt. Isaac Davis was the first officer to lay down his life.*
>
> *Resolved that a copy of this resolution be sent to Capt. Charles T. Ripley as an expression of our appreciation and regard."*

At the High School Commencement of 1907 Ethel May Griswold, Harold Vernon Symonds, Ethel Elizabeth Thompson, and Ralph

Waldo Piper comprised the senior class. None of these could have been aware that many years would elapse before another group of graduates would receive diplomas before an Acton audience on Acton soil. The three teachers, Walter B. Pierce, Ethel L. Leighton, and Alice N. McIntyre, although not yet certain of the course of events, were not without some qualms for the future.[1]

About a quarter of a century had elapsed since the bounty fight of 1882 and Acton, with a regularity comparable to that of Old Faithful in the Yellowstone, was building up stresses for another eruption. The initial gurglings went back over several years during which time the school committee had repeatedly demanded action respecting the high school. The climax arrived, however, when the inspector of public buildings served notice that the hall that had been in use for the South Grammar could no longer be tolerated and was to be vacated at the end of the current spring term.

At that time the High School occupied the rooms in the South schoolhouse now used by the fifth and sixth grades. The school committee therefore, confronted with the dilemma of having to house the grammar school in September without available space, appealed to the town for relief.

To the casual observer it appeared to be a simple open-and-shut case but there was much that did not immediately meet the eye. On June 4th at a special evening town meeting the battle began on a hot night with a room crowded to capacity. Mr. Allen Brooks Parker was chosen moderator and the temper of the crowd was apparent on the first article.

> *"To see if the town will vote to purchase or take by right of eminent domain a suitable piece of land and build a high school building thereon, or take any action in the matter."*

Immediately several persons arose to make and second a motion that the article be stricken from the warrant. This motion failed. Thereupon a motion to support the article, namely to secure land and build a high school thereon was put before the meeting. This also failed.

Having arrived at this impasse action came upon article three which posed the question as to what to do about the schoolhouse at South Acton. A motion to pass over the article failed as did also a motion to build an addition.

This exhausted the articles in the warrant but from the floor came a bombshell in the form of a motion to remove the pupils from the high school rooms at South Acton and send them to Concord.

[1] Walter B. Pierce (Bates College) died June 17, 1945; Ethel L. Leighton (Radcliffe College) married Professor Harold B. Stanton of Rutgers and died May 9, 1947; Alice N. McIntyre (Boston University) married Rev. Edgar Crossland of South Acton, and died Nov. 2, 1950.

This failed of passage after about an hour's debate in which tempers became edgy.

Then some compromiser proposed that the two upper classes be sent to Concord and the remainder allocated to one vacant room at West Acton. This also failed to pass.

By this time all the contestants were exhausted and sleepy and so the only positive vote of the evening came on a motion to refer the whole matter to the school committee.

Thus ended the first round, but the end was nowhere in sight. By petition a second meeting convened on the evening of June 27th when action again came up on the identical articles under debate three weeks earlier.

As soon as a moderator was chosen Mr. Charles Kimball moved that the town erect a high school building at a cost not to exceed fifteen thousand dollars complete; said building to be located on the Ellis Wetherbee lot on Prospect Street in South Acton.[1]

By common consent it was agreed to split the motion into two parts and after long debate a vote to build prevailed by 142 to 134. After much more wrangling in which it became evident that the south and west villages were determined that neither should have the advantage a motion by Lorenzo Reed of South Acton to the effect that the site be near or at Acton Centre passed by a vote of 185 to 92.

It was during the debate on this question that Mr. F. C. Nash, an alert and experienced attorney of West Acton, occasioned mild hilarity by observing that, "South Acton must not expect to have all the good things", a sly jibe referring to certain goings-on at the old American House.

Thereupon a building committee consisting of two men from each village plus the chairmen of the selectmen and the school committee and the town clerk ex-officio was chosen.[2]

The opponents of the project, having been defeated in the attempt to prevent the building of a high school, now lay in wait for a chance to throttle any attempt to vote the necessary funds. On the motion of Mr. Luther Conant that the selectmen be empowered to borrow if necessary up to ten thousand dollars they brought up all the heavy artillery and inveighed concerning the terrible debts about to be hung around the necks of future generations. In the light of modern financing the whole argument appears amusing but on that hot June night nobody felt facetious as the hour approached midnight. Finally the question was put and the tellers, after a double

[1] The old ball field at the rear of what was then the Universalist parsonage.

[2] Precinct 1: Edwin A. Phalen, J. Sidney White;
Precinct 2: Charles M. Kimball, William Rawitser;
Precinct 3: Edgar H. Hall, William F. Kelley.

count, found that the motion to borrow had prevailed by the narrow margin of 114 to 112. With everyone in a state of nervous exhaustion a motion to adjourn passed amid wild shouts of relief.

During the weeks that the controversy was in progress the school committee[1] being between the upper and the nether millstones, held protracted meetings and considered at length various alternatives. One envisaged packing the forty pupils into the single room at West Acton — a debatable procedure; another plan was to build on to the South school but this had two major objections; the high school ought not to be in the same building with the lower grades, and moreover the town had for ten years refused to act favorably on such a scheme. Consequently the board began to dicker with the Concord authorities for the absorption of the three upper classes while the first year, upon the suggestion of the town counsel, was to be taught at West Acton.

In making these advances the committee was taking into careful consideration the fact that the political pot was still boiling and that unless they were foresighted another town meeting could so disrupt things that September might arrive with no haven for the high school.

Their premonitions were amply sustained when on the evening of August 8th the third and final battle was waged with plenty of political fireworks. The opposition party had written into the warrant an article relating to the borrowing of the ten thousand dollars for the building of the high school. When the voting took place the authorization to borrow was defeated by 96 to 68.

Having thus put a quietus upon any building program the next question was to see if the town would pay the cost of transportation to another town. On this issue a motion to dismiss the article prevailed.

Then came the queerest twist in the whole performance. Article four was to see if the town would rescind the vote whereby it decided to build a high school. In the light of the temper of the meeting it seemed a foregone conclusion that this would carry easily but — lo and behold — the fickle electorate refused to rescind and decided to lay the matter on the table.

As a result of all this jockeying Acton was in the position of having voted to erect a high school building at or near the Centre but refusing to raise or borrow the money to make it possible. Back of this lay the submerged fact that certain groups were opposed to any high school unless it was conveniently located for them.

Since the school committee, suspecting such a situation might arise, had already made a tentative agreement with Concord, it was moved by Samuel Guilford that the town sustain such action. The

[1] Charles J. Williams, Dr. Samuel A. Christie, Arthur F. Blanchard.

motion failed by 83 to 95. Thereupon F. C. Nash moved that the school committee be sustained in sending the two upper classes to Concord. This likewise failed by 95 to 115.

During this amazing performance a number of the interested youth of high school age sat in the gallery and wondered whether or not they would ever see a diploma from Acton or any other place. They were rescued from this dilemma when Mr. Luther Conant arose and made it clear that in his opinion the parliamentary shenanigins had become a disgrace. He thereupon moved that the town instruct the selectmen to procure able counsel to defend itself and the school committee in any suit that might be brought against it. The motion passed by an overwhelming viva voce vote.

Thus ended the hectic summer of 1907. Pressed by state action from above and unsupported by any actual vote from the town the school committee sent the thirty six scholars of the upper three classes to Concord and put the freshman class at West Acton in charge of Miss McIntyre.[1]

If one wished to divide the history of the Acton High School into epochs one could say that the first epoch, the period during which there was a three year school, covered the span from 1886 to 1894; the epoch of the four year curriculum extended from 1895 to 1907; the third epoch, the Concord era began in the autumn of 1907 and terminated with the building of the present High School at Kelley's Corner in 1925-26.

Of the thirty six scholars sent to Concord four were seniors, namely, Annie Kinsley, Ella Baker, Elmer Wetherbee and Harold Phalen. This group was graduated the following June along with as many other natives who never had attended the local school. It can be said to the credit of the little Acton school that had just been strangled that the four mentioned above made records in every respect comparable to those who had been at Concord all four years. Miss Kinsley secured a summa cum laude.

In connection with this transfer to Concord there was one item which although of no historical significance seemed important to the Acton group and their families at the time. Mr. George S. Miller, later to become vice-president of Tufts College for many years, but then a teacher of Physics at Concord, offered cups for excellence in debating for two successive years. Another was put up by someone else a third year. All three were won by Acton boys, namely, Harold Phalen, Leonard White, and Aurin Payson.[2]

The above was interjected merely as a side remark. The main

[1] Beginning with September of 1913 all four classes were sent to Concord.
[2] Leonard White has been for many years a professor at Chicago University. Aurin Payson is the president of the American Thermos Bottle Company of Norwich, Conn.

stream of the high school question was still rather murky. After having apparently solved the problem an opinion came down from the Attorney General, Mr. Dana Malone, in January of 1908 asserting that the set up at West Acton was unlawful. In the face of this dilemma it is not surprising that the school committee, wearied and disgusted, vented a bit of spleen by inserting in the town report the following paragraph which shows all the earmarks of the literary style of the chairman, Charles J. Williams.[1]

> *"When the state Board of Education is not engaged in the serious labor of collecting statistics, it not infrequently occupies itself in doing, or attempting to do, an injury to the public schools. Hence the fact that the town was, this year, very near to losing temporarily at least its proportion of the income of the Massachusetts school fund, amounting to about* $1,100.00, *and would have done so but for the good offices of the superintendent of schools."*

This splurge was deleted by vote of the next annual town meeting but Mr. Williams had characteristically spoken his piece and the voters had had a year in which to enjoy it.

Apparently the school committee decided to let the state whistle for a while since the one year at the west school continued until 1913. In the meantime, however, since Concord had no ninth grade and permitted competent scholars to move directly from the eighth grade into high school Acton discontinued the ninth grades at the West and Centre and made consequent reallocations of rooms in all three villages.

The high school controversey diminished in intensity for a season but came to the fore again throughout the years from 1911 to 1914. Votes were taken and rescinded, locations chosen and repudiated, sums of money voted and then unvoted with amazing facility but no real solution was attained.[2] Eventually the first World War thrust itself into the picture with such vigor that minor matters were allowed to remain in abeyance.

Actually the war served to hasten a change in civic thinking that was already on the way. The nature and the spirit of the population was changing under the impact of a national crisis compounded with the new transportation facilities offered by the automobile. When it became evident that in an emergency one could traverse Acton from end to end in fifteen minutes the old village rivalries began to appear silly. Furthermore Acton was becoming a town of commuters, un-

[1] Town report of March 1908, p. 118.

[2] Some of the locations chosen and repudiated were the following: The Moses Reed hill at the Centre (now the site of the Carl Olsen home); the Franklin lot in So. Acton; the Kimball lot also in South Acton; the Payson, Rouillard property at the Centre (now owned by Mrs. Washburn and Arthur Wayne).

learned in the hory animosities, and anxious to like and be liked by the whole population. Under this influence the town began to be the social, political and aesthetic unit envisioned by the men of 1735 — a whole township in which every citizen could have a pride.

In 1908 Mr. George C. Wright, who had always had an active interest in the town and its well being, offered to build a chapel for Mt. Hope Cemetery. At its March meeting in 1909 the town passed the following resolution:

> *Whereas, our fellow townsman, George C. Wright of West Acton, has erected a chapel in Mt. Hope Cemetery and has presented it to the town, and it has been accepted in behalf of the town by its selectmen and the cemetery commissioners.*
>
> *Resolved. That we, the citizens of Acton, in town meeting assembled, do hereby recognize the generosity and public spirit of Mr. Wright and express to him our thanks for his gift.*

According to the best information attainable Mr. Wright had given orders to build a chapel at his expense. Due to a lack of understanding or to the extremely modest ideas of the town officials a small building was erected which although quite diflerent from what he had envisioned, Mr. Wright agreed to accept and present to the town for whatever purpose it might serve. At present it functions as an office and storehouse.

So deep was the sentiment held by Mr. Luke Blanchard for Acton that when he approached the end of his days it was his wish that the memorial erected by him to his heroic forebears Calvin and Luther should be owned by the town and cared for in perpetuity by funds left by him. This astute business man had a deep vein of sentimentality. He desired to go into the life beyond, feeling that he and the town of Acton would jointly share in the modest recognition accorded the two youths of his family who went forth to battle at the onset of the Revolution.

Consequently, on March 29, 1909, the town unanimously passed the following two votes.

> 1. *To accept the Calvin and Luther Blanchard memorial and the premises belonging thereto given to the town by the will of the late Luke Blanchard.*
>
> 2. *To accept from the trustees under the will of Luke Blanchard five hundred dollars, the income to be expended in the care of the burial lot of said Blanchard, also the sum of one hundred dollars, the income to be expended in the preservation and care of the Calvin and Luther Blanchard memorial, and the sum of one hundred dollars to be expended in the preservation and care of the family tomb,*

formerly belonging to Simon Blanchard of Boxborough, to invest said funds and expend the income thereof in accordance with the provisions specified in the will of the said Blanchard.

It was during this period, the spring of 1910 to be exact, that one of Acton's former residents returned from heroic and world famous service in the mission field to lay down her weary body forever.

Corinna Shattuck, born in Kentucky on April 21, 1848, was a cousin of Mr. Anson Conant Piper and a direct descendant of the Rev. Benjamin Shattuck, the first minister to preach in Littleton. As a girl she lived in South Acton and later, while teaching at the Southest school during the winter and spring of 1869-70, boarded at the home of Mr. Joseph Wilde. One snowy winter Sunday she heard a missionary speak at the Centre church and then and there was born the unquenchable interest in the calling in which she was to be phenominally successful.

Pursuant of her aroused desire she attended the Framingham Normal. She was not a girl endowed with personal charm, foreign languages proved exceedingly difficult for her, and her family background was of such consumptive tendency that her teachers had small enthusiasm for her objectives. Despite these handicaps she could not be dissuaded from her choice of a life work. She was a friend and admirer of Myra Proctor, also a graduate of Framingham and the head of a mission school in Turkey. As a student she was very exemplary and painstaking, absolutely faithful, and always stood well in her classes.

She was graduated from Framingham in 1872 and went to Aintab, Turkey, in 1873. At first she travelled about and established schools; then she taught in Marash (1883); and finally settled at Oorfa (1893) not at that time a mission station. For a while she had the company of one other woman but shortly was left alone. In Oorfa her principal work was the training of Bible women until about 1893.

At that time her tubercular weakness had so far become evident that she returned to the United States and spent two years in Colorado Springs where she lived an open air life in a tent. Before her return to Turkey she was able to go on a speaking tour and address immense crowds and hold their avid interest.

She returned to Turkey in 1895 and arrived in time to be present during the colossal massacres of that year. When the Turks and the Kurds rode through the city she was the only foreigner there. All the Christians who could crowded into the missionary premises. She stood in the door and told the Turks they could enter only over her dead body.

After the massacre was over she went about dressing wounds with

the aid of a strange man not associated with the mission. She found literally thousands of widows and orphans absolutely helpless. On their behalf she petitioned the Turkish government for bedding and other supplies with some success. She set the women to work on native embroidery and wrote to the United States and England for sales. A Belfast, Ireland, concern sent her thousands of handkerchiefs to adorn and that industry became self supporting. Some of these samples of handicraft together with rugs and handwrought silver were among the items sold at the churches in Acton. Carpentering, iron working, shoemaking, farming and other occupations followed, carried on between classes and in the evening. For help in this work she secured an able young mechanic from Ireland, who remained on in Oorfa after her death.

The institutions at Oorfa which owe their origin directly to Miss Shattuck are the Boys' Industrial Institute, the Orphanage, the Women's Handkerchief Industries, and the School for the Blind. This latter was established partly through the agency of Mary Harootenian, a pupil of Miss Shattuck who was blind. Miss Shattuck sent her to the Royal Normal College for the Blind in London which was under the direction of Sir Francis Campbell, husband of Sophia Faulkner, also of Acton. Lady Campbell was a substantial donor to the school for the blind at Oorfa.

During her latter years she directed the immense Oorfa activities from her sick bed.

In an Easter message pamphlet entitled "*To Little David of Smyrna*" Rev. William Allen Knight of Framingham, who is still active in the office of the Framingham News although in his nineties, tells of Miss Shattuck's last days. It appears that he and his wife were on the same ship enroute to America. During the passage through the Mediterranean a pale and sickly old woman lying in a steamer chair, wrapped in blankets and showing signs of suffering, attracted their attention. After the ship cleared Gibraltar Mrs. Knight and other solicitous ladies sought her out and ministered to her so far as they were able. To them she was a stranger who kept her identity to herself. Nevertheless they were aware that she was some unusual person. The ship's surgeon had told them that he was doubtful that she would survive the passage.

One night when the sea was running high the women asked Rev. Knight to go down and talk with the stranger and read to her from the Bible. He was kindly received and after a time he suspected who she was and put her identity to the question. She admitted the fact and he read to her from the Twenty Third Psalm after which she thanked him for the peace he had brought to her.

Dr. Knight telegraphed by wireless for an ambulance to be at the

dock. She was taken to the Cullis home and died within a fortnight, on May 22, 1910 and was interred on May 25th in the missionary lot in the Newton Cemetery.

Perhaps no better opportunity will present itself for comment concerning an Acton native who became locally prominent, namely Albert Francis Conant, also a cousin of Miss Shattuck.

The father, Francis Conant, a direct descendant of Roger Conant of Salem, lived on the farm now owned by Mr. John Enneguess on what is fittingly named Conant Street. Here he raised ten children (of which Albert, born 1843, was the eldest) in the best New England traditions of civic responsibility and thrift.

In 1850 the family moved to Boxborough but Albert continued to attend school in Acton and had Nora Faulkner as a teacher. Subsequently he studied at the Lawrence Academy in Groton and also in Pepperell and New Ipswich. Thereafter he taught school for a short time in Harvard and Littleton.

In 1868 he and his brother Nelson purchased a store at Littleton Common. In 1883 Nelson sold his interest and the firm became Conant & Co. and thrived under the direction of Albert to such an extent that it eventually embraced three disturbing points and supported eleven countryside routes.

In 1869 he married Sarah Jane Patten of Westford.

A manuscript written by him in his later years which had for its theme the events that can be spanned by one lifetime contains several most interesting commentaries. Among these he recalls attending primary school in South Acton which made it necessary for him to cross the single track which at that time extended only to West Acton. He remembers the first mowing machine to come to Boxborough (in 1853), a wooden framed affair that was prone to shake itself apart. It was shortly followed by the wheel horserake, invented by a man from Harvard. In another place he records being in a group who were invited to the home of a Mrs. Preston in Boxborough, about 1850, to witness the demonstration of the first kerosene lamp in town. In 1852, upon the occasion of the death of Daniel Webster, a great event occurred. There being no telegraph the news was sent by a special engine without a car — and all this on a Sunday!

In another of his writings he tells how as a boy he was taken to see the last vestiges of the cabin supposed to have been the dwelling place of a man named Speen, presumably the last of the Nashoba Indians. Although this appears to contradict an earlier assertion that Sarah Dublet was the final survivor it is possible that the two statements can be reconciled. Among the Indian signers to the deed for the land for the town of Stow, executed May 9, 1684, appear the names John Speen and Tom Dublet. Since at that time Nashoba

was near its end it may well be that Sarah Dublet was the last to die while Speen was the last of the men to survive.

Mr. Conant died in 1941 at the age of ninety eight after enjoying a surprisingly active season as a nonogenarian.

For many years the town had struggled along with inadequate kerosene street lights that were arranged to function only during the dark of the moon. New thinking and new travelling patterns arrived with the automobile. Traffic was using the roads twenty four hours a day. A person on the highway at two in the morning was no longer of necessity a drunk or a suspicious character.

It was natural therefore that in 1911 the town voted to enter into a contract with the American Woolen Company of Maynard to supply electric current. The selectmen were authorized to install one hundred electric lamps throughout the town with the proviso that eighteen additional could be added if necessary. Needless to say, as time went on, nearly every town warrant for years contained requests for additional service to keep pace with the change in the character of the town as it became increasingly suburban.

With the termination of the year Acton saw another of its long time servants lay down his duties. In recognition of his retirement the voters passed the following resolution respecting their town treasurer:

> *"Voted: Unanimously the following resolution: That the inhabitants of Acton, in town meeting assembled March* 27, 1911, *in recognition of the courtesy, ability, and faithfulness of the retiring town treasurer, Mr. Jona. K. W. Wetherbee, who has served the town in that capacity for more than thirty years, hereby express their thanks to him and their best wishes for the present and the future."*

It will be recalled that Mr. Wetherbee was the last surviving member of the closley knit company of Tuttle, Jones and Wetherbee that monopolized the trade of the countryside for a quarter of a century after the coming of the railroad. He was a kindly man who always wore a beard, was always carefully dressed, always reserved, and never idle.

In this same year the towns of the Commonwealth were asked to make appropriations to assemble and print the vital statistics for the use of the state archives and the New England Genealogical Society. Acton readily voted in favor of this important idea and hence we have in our library the records of births, marriages, and deaths for the Massachusetts towns up to 1850.

Only the research historian can fully appreciate what this means to the student of the past. To the casual reader it may seem routine but let it be made clear that in many towns throughout our land the

important papers have been lost by burning, malicious mischief, or colossal carelessness. In certain localities the only records were in family Bibles or church minutes, which now and then fell into the custody of extremely nonchalant individuals. Cases have been cited where invaluable documents were used for wall paper or for musket wadding.

If this seems incredible the following certifiable instances are apropos. During the Civil War the records of Charles City County, Virginia, were used by the Union Army to kindle campfires and for less delicate personal needs; a French butcher once wrapped up a piece of meat for a customer in a handful of waste paper that turned out to be documents in the handwriting of the great English writer Boswell; and, most astounding, in 1889 the Constitution of the United States was found to be kept in an unmarked and commonplace box in an obscure niche in one of the government buildings. In the light of these facts the meticulous care exercised by Acton's public servants through past generations merits high regard.

It has previously been noted that Acton had for many years been jealous of Lake Nagog as a potential water supply, and had upon occasion appointed committees having the sole objective of staving off any attempts by the town of Concord to obtain state sanction for appropriating it. As time went on, however, particularly after careful surveys showed the water level was too low for any attempt at gravity service, the town looked foward to driven wells if and when the problem should be solved.

Accordingly Concord secured the rights to the lake and ran the pipe line down the valley of Nagog Brook, past the remains of the old dam of Daniel White's mill, and along the Great Road through East Acton. The head end of the pipe line, at the intake point, is five hundred feet behind the dam. The pipe was carried out on a raft and placed in position by divers.

There were several more or less direct results of this move on the part of Concord, most of them unpublicized and in some cases probably unnoticed. One was that the many summer cottages that had been built and the summer colony that had come to be identified with them disappeared except for a hardy few who chose to remain even though bathing privileges were at an end. The little summer store operated by Mr. J. Sidney White also was a natural casualty. In addition the move definitely put period to the use of Lamson's Point as a recreation place. Only those of the older generation can recall the eagerness with which they anticipated the annual Sunday school picnic among the towering white pines. Another result was that subsequently Acton voted to contract with Concord for eight hydrants in East Acton for a term of ten years at twenty three

dollars per unit. The objectionable features seemed potent at the time but the turn of the years has brought out the fact that in taking the water Concord preserved Nagog to the town of Acton.

Furthermore, with the repairing of the dam the flow of Nagog Brook became only a fraction of its former volume. As one rode along Main St. toward what used to be called Jock Wheeler's Corner (the junction of routes 2 and 27) there was, just to the right of the bridge over the brook, an old fashioned drinking ford for cattle and horses. The diminution in the flow rendered this convenience useless but worked only a minor annoyance since the horse era was on the way out. Acton had two other such fords. The site of one, long since unused, was completely obliterated by the new super-highway at the point where it crosses under route 27. The evidences of the other may still be found a few rods downstream from the bridge over Fort Pond Brook near Mt. Hope Cemetery.

Since the water was always shallow in these fords they were ideal places in which to wash a buggy or to fill up water barrels. The farmer who had a loose tire took pains to drive through the ford as frequently as possible and thereby swell the felly tight against it. Needless to say, the local youngsters too small to be allowed to accompany deep water swimmers scampered about ad libitum in the summer months. The old timers who dug out these watering places were public benefactors indeed.

One other result was the impetus given to one of Acton's well known enterprises, namely, the Greenough Construction Company. Mr. George Greenough came to Acton from Nova Scotia and over a series of years established himself in a combination farming and haulage business of modest dimensions. In the meantime he had married Miss Sarah Edwards and they had raised two sons into the teen age. The Nagog water project was his first major contract and was followed by the Acton water works, a similar service for the city of Hartford and installation of the streets and drives for the Loomis Argicultural College at Windsor, Connecticut. Thereafter highway contracts in Maine and Massachusetts became routine. In 1919 Mr. Greenough, with twelve other New England contractors, met in Boston and formed the New England Road Builders Association. In 1922 the elder son, Frank, returned from the war and the Greenough Construction Company was formed. Subsequently, when the younger son, Ernest, graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he too came into the business. In 1942 the elder Mr. Greenough retired and the firm became Greenough Brothers Incorporated with Mr. Frank Greenough taking over the direction of the Assabet Sand and Gravel Company, a branch enterprise.

In 1912 a group of less than twenty young mothers of Acton Centre

formed a club with the objective of providing a forum for the discussion of child rearing. For two years they met at the homes of diverse members. In 1915 other ladies who were not eligible for membership in such an organization put forth the suggestion of forming a women's club. Mrs. Oliver D. Wood, secretary of the original mother's club, and Mrs. Luther Conant 3rd, then a resident of Acton Centre, enthusiastically fostered the project. As a consequence all interested ladies were invited to convene at the Conant homestead. Forty one responded to the invitation and thereupon the present day Acton Centre Women's Club was organized with Miss Charlotte Conant as president.

The club first held its meetings in the vestry of the Congregational church. At the end of four years the home of the late Mrs. John White (now the home of the Misses Torrey and Lincoln) was purchased. There the group met for five years at which time the house was sold and the proceeds put into the purchase of the old chapel, which, after being extensively altered emerged as the present commodious building.

Mrs. John M. Brown contributed greatly to the project and the assembly hall is named for her. The silver urns and the flat silver were donations from Mrs. Isabella Griffin and Mrs. Goward.

With proper ceremonials the mortgage was burned in 1940.

The diverse activities of the club are, as was the case with the analogous club at West Acton, well known as to type and much too extensive for inclusion in this volume.

On July 22, 1913 Acton had reason to be grateful to those men who had fought for and brought about the installation of an adequate water supply. A half century previous the Centre had been all but wiped out and only by sheer luck did the town escape during the intervening years. At about eleven in the morning of the day mentioned a fire started in the barn on the estate of Luke Blanchard on Windsor Ave. in West Acton. This was entirely destroyed and the two houses on the estate were damaged as well as the fire house next door.

Embers carried by a strong wind ignited the Dr. Hutchins property just across the railroad tracks. Here the barn was destroyed along with the ell of the house and the main house gutted. A row of buildings including an ice house, milk house, and a storehouse in the rear of the depot together with several freight cars were next consumed and only with the greatest effort was the station saved.

A coal shed and contents and the cold storage plant and a portion of the barrel factory also went up in flames while the newly built St. Elizabeth's church, not yet dedicated, was saved after being ignited numerous times.

The two tenement dwelling next to the schoolhouse lost its roof and was otherwise badly damaged. The barn of W. C. Gardner across from the school was destroyed and the house damaged.

Over and above this many incipient roof fires were extinguished by owners. Outside assistance was called from Concord, Maynard and Fitchburg. A special train from the latter city brought a steamer, hose wagon, two pairs of horses and a number of men. Had it not been for the newly installed water system the whole of the village east of the railroad might well have been eliminated.

In 1914 the town for the first time printed its annual report for the year ending December 31st and thus cleared the way for the introduction of fiscal and political years that coincided with the calendar years.

With town water an established fact, the West Acton fire freshly in mind, and World War I already in process the public interest turned toward something tangible in the matter of fire protection. At the March meeting of 1915 the selectmen were instructed to organize the fire department, appoint precinct engineers, and establish the pay for the same. In accordance with these instructions William H. Kingsley was appointed Chief. The engineers were as follows; Precinct 1, Dexter L. Spinney; Arthur F. Harris, Emerick P. Gates; Precinct 2, Nelson J. Cole, Edward C. Page, Warren H. Jones; Precinct 3, Edgar T. Rice, A. B. Parker, W. J. Costello.

An innovation was also made in another direction during the year. Upon motion of Mr. Luther Conant the town voted to support the Misses Susan and Martha Oliver, "in the manner in which they now live". Superficially this has no meaning for the Acton newcomer. The case deserves some special comment since it establishes the fact that Acton was in the vanguard with respect to considerate care of the unfortunate.

These two elderly spinsters lived in the house on Great Road now occupied by Mrs. Alpheus Baxter. Susan, then aged ninety three (she died at ninety six) had been in a wheel chair since her early womanhood. Some thirty years before her death she slipped from the chair and broke her hip. Nevertheless she was a cheerful and happy person who always looked on the bright side of life. The sister Martha handled the household affairs as long as she was able but eventually she too became bedridden. The brother, Ephraim, the former wage earner for the three, was burned to death in 1887 while attempting to rescue his horses from the burning barn. A nurse cared for the two ladies until their funds were exhausted whereupon Acton voted a rousing YEA upon the motion as put by Mr. Conant.

As evidencee that this was no sporadic move the town voted in 1919 to sell the town farm and apply the sixteen thousand five hundred

dollars to some other project, in this case the high school fund.

By 1917 the conflict in Europe had become something more than a spectacle to be watched from afar with unconcern. At the annual town meeting on March 5th Allen Brooks Parker, Horace F. Tuttle, and James McGreen were appointed as a committee to draw up a set of resolutions bearing upon the world crisis. Thereafter the town voted unanimously in favor of the following:

> *Resolved: That we, the citizens of Acton, Mass., in annual town meeting assembled, assure the President of the United States that his efforts to preserve peace and protect the lives and property of our citizens upon the high seas, and to uphold the rights of the nation to conduct its commerce unmolested shall and do have our support, and we assure the President that the spirit prevailing among us today is the same as was manifested by our "Minute Men of '75", and our "Patriots of '61".*

Voted that an engrossed copy, bearing the seal of the town be sent to the President by the moderator and the town clerk.

With growth of the fire department there came the inevitable question concerning the purchase of trucks for both building and forest service. An article to this effect did not prevail whereupon Mrs. Gertrude Daniels, through her daughter Mrs. Isabella Griffin, offered her Chalmers touring car to be equipped as a fire truck, together with a driver, provided the truck be stored in her garage at North Acton.

The town immediately and unanimously accepted the gift and appropriated three hundred and fifty dollars for the necessary equipment.

Mrs. Daniels first became identified with Acton when her brother Dr. Frank Barker began his practice at the Centre. She had formerly lived in Colorado and Pittsfield, Mass. and had come to the town merely as a visitor with her two small children Isabella and Howard. Eventually she moved to Acton, bought the Bellows Farm on Davis Road, and remained an ardent and active citizen until the time of her death.

The year 1917 marks the origin of the movement that shortly became known casually as the Acton Fair. In the spring the town had chosen a committee[1] to improve the grounds surrounding the town hall and this move seemed to bring to a head an idea that had been hatching in the minds of certain members of the Grange and other civic minded citizens. The open field lying directly behind the Library and the town hall was an inviting prospect in that it was centrally located and ample in size for any anticipated crowd.

[1] Edwin A. Phalen, Luther Conant, 3rd, Horace F. Tuttle.

Consequently the Acton Agricultural Association was formed and started with Mr. James B. Tuttle as president for the years 1917-18-19. From the outset the project suceeded far beyond the anticipations of the sponsors. On this account, after operating with hired tents for a time, the Association incorporated, sold stock, and erected permanent buildings. A list of the presidents with the years of service is given herewith

Clarence N. Goward	1920-21-28-31-32
George A. Richardson	1922-23-29-33-34-36
W. Stuart Allen	1924-25
Frank A. Merriam	1926-27
Murray Brown	1930
Major Charles S. Coulter	1935
Carl A. Johnson	1936-37

In its hey-day the Acton Fair was known throughout the whole countryside and was rated by the State Grange and the Agricultural bureaus as equal to any for towns of comparable size. Eventually the prime movers no longer had the energy to cope with the prodigious labors involved and retired from the scene. With their passing, however, the spirit seemed to be gone and within a few years the project languished and expired.

In due course the town needed housing facilities for its highway department and Mr. Stuart Allen, being then on the finance committee, interested influential persons in the idea that the land behind the town hall should belong to the town. He then persuaded the largest stockholders in the Agricultural Association to return to the town such checks as they might get from the sale of the assets of the Association. In 1941 the town passed the necessary legislation to buy the land under the given conditions for the use of the highway department. In this way Acton procured at a very reasonable figure the land in question and the Association was able to close its books at a hundred cents on the dollar. In the process the town obtained in 1944 a playground now known as the Goward Playground. It was fenced in 1946.

Considerable time has been spent in foregoing pages with respect to the details of the town's participation in the various wars of the country's history. World War I initiated a completely new era in armed conflict and the attitude toward it. Heretofore wars have been regarded as unusual deviations from the standard pattern of life. The number actually engaged was a minor percentage of the population. During World War I, however, and certainly ever since, the soldiers of the United States have been on foreign soil for one reason or another. The volunteer system is a thing of the past; thousands of women are in the services and in the industries, and the whole national psychology has altered beyond recognition. Some few wistfully expect

matters to change but forces have been let loose in Asia that bode no peace in any predictable future. The colonial systems of Spain, France, England and other European countries sowed the wind centuries ago and it has been the misfortune of this generattion to be around to reap the whirlwind.

Any discussion of Acton's war activities in modern times with detail comparable to that accorded the Revolutionary or the Civil wars is a task too extensive for a single volume such as this. Thirty years of military record would be of encyclopedic dimensions.

The list of the town's citizens who served in World War I appears in Appendix XXI and on the memorial tablet on Acton Common. Of the one hundred and eleven on that list two were women, namely, Mary E. Coughlin and Edith E. Frost. Howard Quimby, for whom Quimby Square in South Acton is named, was the only fatality. He died of tubercular pleurisy while awaiting transportation home. He was a graduate of the Concord High School of the class of 1911 and of Brown University in 1915. Previous to his enlistment in the armed forces he had worked as a civil engineer for the Pennsylvania Railroad. His military affiliation was Battery A, 304th Field Artillery, 77th Division.

At a special town meeting held June 29, 1919 the following committee, consisting of five persons from each precinct, was chosen to make proper arrangements for welcoming the Acton contingent upon its return: William H. Kingsley, Warren H. Jones, Charles J. Holton, Gertrude C. Daniels, Clara Sawyer, Albert R. Beach, Charlotte Conant, Lulu M. Clark, Helen A. Knowlton, James B. Tuttle, Fred L. Burke, Rachel A. Haynes, Horace F. Tuttle, Frank W. Hoit, Bertram D. Hall.

In March of 1920 the town voted a sum of money for the purpose of paying a director for demonstration work in agriculture and home economics and for the supervision of boys' and girls' club work.

Simultaneously it was decided by the town to accept the fund hitherto known as the West Acton Firemen's Relief Fund and choose a board of three to administer the same.

On August 26, 1920 the nineteenth amendment to the constitution, known as the Women's Sufferage Law became operative. In Acton it had the following results. In the election four years previous Hughes and Fairbanks (Republican) polled 316 votes; Wilson and Marshall (Democrat) 105, with 12 scattering. Under the new sufferage law of 1920 the presidential vote was Harding and Coolidge (Republican) 704; Cox and Roosevelt (Democrat) 88; Debs and Stedman (Socialist) 2, with fifteen blanks.

The Cox and Roosevelt vote was considerably out of line percentagewise for the town in general. As a usual thing the Republican vote

is between seventy and seventy five per cent of the total. Conclusive evidence of this is that in three elections held in 1940, 1944, 1948 out of a total vote of 4458 for president the Republican total was 3310 and the Democratic total 1048.

Another very minor event took place in 1920 that then seemed wholly incapable of influencing the life of the town but time has proved otherwise. During that year there arrived upon the scene John Pederson and his wife from Wisconsin whither they had migrated from Norway some dozen years or more previously. For a time the new arrival worked for Mr. Arthur Blanchard in the apple business. Eventually he purchased a second hand truck and set out for himself in a modest fashion. Before long he was hauling paper for the Pepperell Paper Company. In 1934 he purchased the little cottage on Newtown Road and with expanding success as the result of integrity and acumen began to build up the business to what it has now become. Mr. Pederson died in 1939. After his death the widow and her large family carried on the business and entered into new contracts with other paper companies and occasionally took on a furniture moving job. Today, with five huge trailers, four tractors, and two standard sized trucks the name Pederson is seen on all the roads of New England. Along with success in business the family has grown to maturity, married, and taken an important place in the local affairs.

The mention of the apple industry brings to mind the fact that at the turn of the century and the decade preceding, Acton and the adjacent portions of Middlesex County were prodigious producers. From Westford, Littleton, Boxborough, Harvard, Bolton, Stow, Concord and Sudbury went a steady stream to the docks of Boston for shipment to Europe. In one season Mr. Luke Blanchard shipped sixty thousand barrels. Added to this was the immense mass of fruit that was absorbed locally. It was not unusual for fifteen hundred bushels to leave Acton in the evening by horse drawn wagons, sometimes bearing a hundred and twenty five bushels to a load, to be on hand at the Faneuil Hall market at daybreak. On top of this were the tons of culls that went to the cider mills.

Aside from the mass production each homestead had in those days, before the present insect pests had established themselves, a kitchen orchard of a couple of dozen trees, augmented by grapes, currants, and diverse berries. Therein one could find brands no longer familiar; Porter and Gravenstein for superb jelly and pie; August Sweet and American Beauty for baking; Astrachan, Williams, and River for early season munching; Russet for apple juice and home made cider; Bellefleur, Northern Spy, Winesap, Hubbardston, and of course the basic Baldwin for autumn and winter use.

The great body of the export crop was the Baldwin — with one

wierd exception. Far down on the list in point of excellence was a nondescript, reddish, bastard offshoot from certain wild strains known as the Ben Davis. In fact its excellence was non-existent. It looked attractive but was corky and tasteless. No country boy would eat one. Even the faces of the cider mill operators took on a grim look when a load of juiceless Ben Davis hauled up to the door. The breed did have, however, one paramount virtue from the standpoint of the shipper — it was well nigh rot proof. It merely shrank and eventually sublimated into invisibility.

For some unfathomable cause it appealed to the British market in preferance to an attractive fruit such as the Pippin or the Rhode Island Greening. The Britons were convinced that to be good an apple had to be on the red side. So — with a knowing smirk, and a sort of feeling that here was a chance to continue the fight at Concord Bridge, and get paid for it, the Middlesex farmers raised the indestructable and sorry Ben Davis to gratify the perverted whims of the export trade.

Needless to say, the tremendous apple industry, seasonal though it was, merely served to augment the already heavy activity of the two major railway offices of the town. Mr. Clarence D. Cram, who for forty years was associated with the West Acton station as telegrapher and station agent had frequently, in addition to the general freight occasioned by the stores and markets, the grain mill, the cider mills, the pail factory, and the milk car that was loaded each morning, the possibility of from fourteen to twenty carloads of apples each night.

Simultaneously Miss Clara Sawyer at South Acton, who was associated with the railway business for forty five years, almost all of them in the capacity of freight agent, saw some twenty five or thirty thousand bushels a year shipped to the local markets along with the numerous mill products ever pouring out of the village during its days as an industrial center.

During approximately an equal period Mr. Will Warren served as the station agent.

While on the subject of freight East and North Acton deserve a word. They could offer no competition in the tonnage on the apple trade but they did handle a tremendous amount of three items probably only rarely appearing on the way-bills at the West and South, namely, quarried stone, cucumbers, and hoops.

The activities connected with the Harris quarries have already been covered. The huge greenhouses of Mr. Henry M. Smith, located on both sides of the track near the present residence of Mr. Woodbine were a real institution at the turn of the century and thereafter. There Mr. Smith and his sons Charles and Albert labored with finesse and success and shipped thousands of boxes of cucumbers and other winter

raised products to the Boston market via the East Acton depot.

The hoop business will need clarification for the modern resident. It has nothing to do with feminine apparel nor with the days of the crinoline. It has to do with incipient lumbering and with machinery and sawdust and by means of it Acton was in the citrus trade in a vicarious fashion.

Each year thousands of poles of the prolific young birch (properly pronounced hoop poles but colloquially mentioned as hoopoles) about two or three inches in diameter and ten or twelve feet long were cut from the Acton pastures and forests. From these were sawed narrow slabs having the bark intact which were bound in bundles of a hundred and shipped to Florida to be soaked to limpness in water and nailed about the citrus fruit crates bound for points all over the country. Wherever the Florida crop was sent a part of Acton went with it.

An hermaphroditic little scoot train consisting of freight cars, flat cars, and one passenger coach bringing up the rear, used to pick up the hoops and carry them to the larger assembling points for shipment south. One Acton resident well recalls spending four hours between Nashua and Concord Junction because of the delays along the route to load on hoops.

For years the Brooks brothers, Bert, Charlie, and George turned out thousands of hoops at the old Brooks place at the corner of Great Road and Strawberry Hill Road. Subsequently the farm was bought by Mr. and Mrs. John Brown and the hoop business moved to the Thomas Thorp place now occupied by Mr. Carl Schontag.

By this time the elder brother George had become well nigh blind but he could still manipulate a razor sharp trimming hatchet and even upon occasion pull the pole away from the buzzing saw while the inexperienced observer suffered with goose pimples and high blood pressure.

The trimmed cores were sold to the townspeople for bean poles or were cut up for firewood, and amazing firewood they made, as any one acquainted with birch will well know.

Mr. Allen Smith was likewise engaged in the same industry for many years but eventually moved to Littleton in pursuit of new areas for cutting and continued operations there.

Despite the fact that Acton almost without exception voted on the dry side of the liquor question there is but one recorded instance where it publicly endeavored to influence the state authorities in the matter. At the March meeting of 1921, upon a motion by Mrs. Lily Case, who had seen long service in the Baptist missions in Burma, the town passed a resolution urging the legislature to enact laws in harmony with the Volstead Act for the enforcement of the eighteenth

amendment and had copies sent to the chairman of the committee on Legal Affairs and to the senator and representative of the local district.

In 1922 Acton moved one more notch urbanward by naming its streets. A committee of three from each precinct embraced the following: J. Sidney White, Horace F. Tuttle, Charlotte Conant, Anson C. Piper, Lewis Hastings, Alice Stiles, Allen Brooks Parker, Waldo E. Whitcomb, Alice M. Carlisle. The street signs were erected in 1925.

On May 5, 1922 West Acton nearly had another holocaust. The Davis-King Garage, which had burned out eight years previously with a loss of twelve automobiles and trucks together with the Holton barber shop, caught fire again on the above date and before the "all out" signal could be sounded the garage, the Windsor Hotel, the storage shed in the rear and a tenement house belonging to Hobart Mead had vanished in smoke Bad as was the result the answer again was ample water supply. Otherwise the whole village might have gone; certainly would have a generation previous.

In a small town such as Acton it is most unusual for a body to be found that cannot be identified. There have been two such cases according to the police record. A man about forty was found in 1922 beside the railway track and about five years later another man was found drowned in Fort Pond Brook.

In the latter part of the year, November 13th, Mr. Luther Conant died. He was the last surviving member of the corporate board named by Mr. Wilde at the time of the building of the Memorial Library, and had served as its president since that time in addition to his innumerable other services. In commenting upon his demise in the town report Mr. Horace F. Tuttle, writing on behalf of the Library Trustees, observes that Mr. Conant spent his whole life on the ancestral farm, that for forty years he presided as moderator of Acton town meetings. He was twice chosen as representative to the State Legislature and that he was an ardent lover of his native place, proud of its patriotic history, and always sought to maintain its best traditions as a citizen.

Through the years Acton has been the recipient of numerous gifts from its sons and daughters and admirers. In 1923 the town voted to accept a sum of twenty five thousand dollars as per the will of George Robert White in memory of his mother Elizabeth. The funds were to be judiciously invested and the income used to "relieve the necessities of deserving poor or unfortunate, preferably widows and orphans, irrespective of citizenship, and particularly in those cases for which the town may not be liable, but may feel a moral obligation to care for". Mr. White exhibited unusual perspicacity in stipulating further that it should be the duty of the town to anticipate such

necessities in order that persons in need, who because of undue sensitivity might refuse to apply for aid, should be benefitted without publicity. Very probably this turn of mind was due to the fact that as a boy in South Acton Mr. White was conscious of the hardships experienced by his mother in supporting herself.

In pursuance of the donor's wish the town appointed Waldo E. Whitcomb, William H. Kingsley, and Warren H. Jones as trustees to carry out the details of the implementing of the fund. Each year the town elects one trustee for a term of three years. As of 1950 the personnel of the group was Waldo E. Whitcomb, Grace O. Lears, and Clara L. Sawyer.

Mr. White was born in Lynnfield, Massachusetts, July 19, 1847 and died in Boston on January 27, 1922. He received his education in the public schools of Acton and Boston. At the age of seventeen he entered the employ of the drug firm of Weeks and Potter in which he subsequently became a partner and president.

In 1878 the company developed a skin ointment which proved so effective that it was decided to manufacture the formula for general sale, and the first box was sold over the counter in that year. The trade name, Cuticura, was originated by Mr. White, who was at the time handling the advertising of the specialty department. Shortly thereafter, again at the suggestion of Mr. White, the beneficial ingredients of the ointment were incorporated into the famous Cuticura soap. With the introduction of this product the enterprise rapidly attained the calibre of big business with the result that in 1883 the Potter Drug and Chemical Company came into being. In 1889 Mr. White became president and held the position with distinction until his death.

An associate of those years has said of him, "Mr. White was one of God's own gentlemen. He was a man of powerful force but always approachable and genial. One never had the feeling that he was an employer. He had worked himself up from the bottom and he never forgot it."

Stories and anecdotes concerning him are non-existent since he avoided the limelight as the plague. To the general public, in fact, he was practically unknown. Only those who read the annual list of the city's largest taxpayers in the newspaper had ever heard of him. Certainly only a handful of Acton residents recognized him for who he was upon the occasions of his periodic visits to the scenes of his boyhood and his lifelong friend Mr. George Ames.

Before his death he gave generously to many institutions, notably to the Museum of Fine Arts of Boston and the million dollar building of the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy. In his will he left three funds of one hundred thousand dollars each to the Massachusetts General Hospital, one for the maintenance of the ward for women and

children, one for the development or maintenance of a department for the treatment of diseases of the skin, and one in trust for the children's hospital to be administered for general purposes of that unit. One wing of the hospital is named after Mr. White.

The major portion of his will, however, was bequeathed to the city of Boston as a permanent charitable fund known as the George Robert White Fund. The original gift amounted to five and a half million dollars. Disbursements have approximated four million for seven health centers set up in the more congested areas of the city. As of 1948 the fund had increased, despite the expenditures, to more than eight and a half millions of which over three millions were then available for new projects. One unusual feature of the bequest was the stipulation that it was to be used for substantial civic improvements which would not be undertaken in the normal course of the city's business. Such was the farsightedness and the generosity of the man whose memorial fountain in the Boston Public Garden is probably looked upon by very few today who know what the name signifies.

Mr. White was a director of the First National Bank of Boston, a Trustee of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, of the Forest Hills Cemetery, and the Gray Herbarium.

He never married, always making his home with his sister, Mrs. Frederick T. Bradbury, who was also generous in her philanthropies to the city.

As the automobile became more and more the uniform method of conveyance it was inevitable that it should push from the scene the horse drawn vehicles and the incidental activities that went with the era. Beginning with the autumn of 1923 the school children were transported by motor busses and the old barges went into the limbo of the past. The final moneys paid out by the town appear in the town report of 1922 as follows; Charles Edwards and John D. Smith $975.00 apiece; W. M. French $420, and A. Christofferson $920.00.

With the change the cost per force increased. Meanwhile the town was spending close to seven thousand dollars a year to transport the high school students to Concord. Not a few of the citizens were beginning to ponder the problem seriously. In his annual report in 1924 Supt. Knight pointed out that the high school, for transportation and tuition combined was expending seventeen thousand dollars per year. Furthermore, in order to get the benefit of cash discounts the moneys due other towns had to be paid promptly. They were fixed charges. An increase in enrollment not anticipated could very readily wipe out what had appeared to be a comfortable balance when the budget was drawn up in January. This could mean that by September the elementary schools might have to initiate drastic

economies until the next fiscal year. The Superintendent pointed out that were the high school in Acton the finances could be more equably allocated according to local necessity.

This was the final broadside in the long battle of the high school which, due to a radical change in public attitude, was to be solved in the not too distant future.

However lethargic Acton was during the nineteenth century in making provision for fire protection the popular mind had surely taken a modern turn during the first quarter century thereafter. At the March meeting of 1924 it was voted to procure three up-to-date fire trucks and to so finance the purchase as to absorb the indebtedness in four years. A committee of nine consisting of the selectmen, the three chief fire engineers and J. Sidney White, Fred L. Burke, Edgar H. Hall was appointed to decide on the disposal of the trucks and other matters pertaining to the requisite changes.

After due consideration it was decided that the best procedure was to equip each village with an efficient piece of apparatus while at the same time making use of whatever was usable on the old trucks. Consequently the body of the South Acton truck was completely rebuilt. The chemical tanks on the West Acton truck were renovated and placed on a new Reo chassis, together with five hundred feet of hydrant hose, and placed at the Centre.

A triple combination pumper, chemical, and hose truck, with two thirty five gallon chemical tanks and one thousand feet of hose was placed in West Acton. A new combination chemical and hose truck carrying two thirty five gallon chemical tanks and one thousand feet of hose was placed in South Acton.

Due to its past unfortunate experiences West Acton already had a fire company but at this time companies were organized at the South and Centre. Under the new set-up the town was able for the first time to profit by minimum insurance rates.

A vote had already been passed to build a new fire house at the Centre on a site close to the old one at the rear of the town hall, but in view of the new facilities the vote was rescinded and a location on Concord St. just across from the residence of Miss Gladys Bean was selected. The new fire house was built and functioned successfully for several years but in due course the much larger and more useful and imposing present building was erected.

As Acton's story has progressed through the years many changes have taken place that would have astounded the early citizenry. Pursuant of the movement into modernity came the demand for permission for Sunday baseball as per the vote of the state in 1920. An article to that end was indefinitely postponed by a vote of 141 to 57 in 1921. It failed again in 1923 but eventually passed in 1924.

With increasing population and the concommitant complexity of civic business Acton was eventually forced to rearrange its town meeting technique. Thereby was sounded the knell of a distinctive and grand old institution — the town meeting dinner. For sixty years after the building of the town hall the town meeting was an all day affair with a big noon collation. The majority of the voters were at that time farmers who could readily spare a day in early March.

For decades the church solicited the edibles and served the meals. Later the Grange assumed the responsibility. At the rear of the lower hall, which then occupied the whole floor area, there were two cook stoves and plenty of good birch and hickory wood. On one would be seen two wash boilers full of coffee and on the other two more filled with prime hams. This latter delicacy was not infrequently in charge of Mr. Moses Reed, not merely because of his good nature and civic interest, but also because he was a surpassing master at the cooking and carving thereof. For a quarter one could get all the baked beans, boiled ham, mashed potatoes, coffee, cake and pie that one could hold. Eating patterns were somewhat different in those days. Salads and the lighter foods were yet in the future. What these yeomen wanted were belly-filling victuals — not vitamins. For some of the folk it was the gorge of the year. A veteran waitress testifies to seeing one of the town's valiant trenchermen stow away three heaping platefuls and top off with five pieces of mince pie together with incidental pickles, cheese, tapioca pudding and cake.

An end comes to all things, however good, and in 1925, pursuant to a previous vote, the town officers were elected by precincts on March 1st. and the regular town meeting was held on March 9th. Eight years later, under the impact of the necessities of a population largely employed out of town during the day, the final demise of the old town meeting came with the inauguration of evening sessions.

In 1925 the town appointed Mr. Albert Jenks as its first forester. He reported that eleven thousand three year old white pine transplants had been procured and distributed to citizens interested in setting them out and properly caring for them. Some of the people requested spruce seedlings in order to start Christmas tree plantations. He further reported that the Keyes and Conant tracts, comprising twenty two acres, had been set aside for town forest work.

In 1925 innovations associated with a burgeoning community went on apace. The town voted to employ a public health nurse in addition to the school nurse already in service although there was no restriction that it might not be the same person. As a matter of fact it was the same person, Mildred E. Walther, who worked in conjunction with the school committee, the board of health, and a special committee composed of Mrs. Eugene L. Hall, Mrs. William Rawitser, and Miss

Charlotte Conant.

The great bombshell of the year, however, was when the town at its March meeting voted the following:

> *"That the town erect a high school building in the vicinity of Kelley's corner, and that the selectmen be and hereby are authorized and directed to petition for legislation to authorize the town to borrow the sum of fifty thousand dollars, outside the debt limit for said purpose".*

and then proceeded without hesitation to nominate and elect George A. Richardson, W. Stuart Allen, Edgar H. Hall, Waldo E. Whitcomb, William Rawitser and Frank Toohey as a building committee.

Always in the past such a vote had been followed by a season of political maneuvering that ended in nullifying the original decision. This time, however, due in large part no doubt to the fact that facile transportation had minimized distances within the town, it appeared at long last as if a spirit of township unanimity had superseded the village jealously of former years. At a special meeting on April 11th by a vote of 332 to 60 (with two ballots blank) it was decided to purchase the necessary land and erect the building at a cost not in excess of one hundred thousand dollars.

The New England town meeting has ever been a forum where the voter could express any opinion within the bounds of propriety that bore on the question at issue. Instances are plentiful where the rugged old individualists of the past indulged in pithy invective concerning the town officials and diverse others of contrary viewpoint to the high glee of the assembled electorate before the moderator could restore parliamentary decorum. Despite the apparent pacific conditions indicated in the paragraph above there were, so the story goes, certain entertaining pyrotechnics relative to land values before the high school question was resolved.

In May Mr. Charles W. Lawrence was elected to organize the high school. His first move was to become familiar with the work that had been done by the students while at Concord and in this he testifies to the kindly assistance accorded him by Principal Goddard. He found that ninety two percent were in the College Preparatory or the Scientific or the Commercial Courses, the balance being in Manual Training or Domestic Science. It seemed to him advisable therefore in the new Acton high school to concentrate on the College Preparatory and the Commercial Courses.

All this led up to the fact that in September of 1925, after a lapse of eighteen years, a new and well appointed Acton High School opened with one hundred and two students and a faculty consisting of Mr. Charles W. Lawrence (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

languages and history; Miss Leona Albrecht and Miss Winifred Bruce (both of Boston University) commercial subjects; Miss Hazel Murray (Boston University) and Miss Mabel Noyes (Wellesley) languages and English; and Mr. L. Ashley Rich (Northeastern University) mathematics and science.

Especial interest centers around the memorial tablets placed in the High School building. From them much can be learned of Acton's past history and of the activities of its prominent men and women. The data appears in the town report for 1926 but is well worthy of repetition here.

Auditorium of the High School:

BLANCHARD HALL
Given in Memory of
LUKE BLANCHARD
1826 - 1901
Merchant of Boston
And
JERUSHA VOSE BLANCHARD
1826 - 1909
LOYAL CITIZENS OF ACTON
By Their Son
ARTHUR F. BLANCHARD
1926

Cooking Room:

The Furnishings of This Room
Were Given as a Memorial to
VARNUM BALFOUR MEAD
1832 - 1908
and
DIREXA ELIZABETH MEAD
1835 - 1900
By Their Children
George Varnum Mead
Frederick Stearns Mead
Adelbert Francis Mead

Typewriting Room:

OLIVER WARREN MEAD
1823 - 1912
A prominent Citizen Active in
Promoting Higher Education and
The General Welfare of the

TOWN OF ACTON
For More Than Fifty Years
This Tablet Erected by His
Children in Affectionate Remembrance

Science Room:

The Fittings and Furnishings of this Room
Were Given by the Children of
GEORGE CLEVELAND WRIGHT
and
SUSAN HASKELL DAVIS WRIGHT
As a Memorial to Their Parents both of Whom
Were Life Long Residents of this Town
1823 - 1910

GEORGE CLEVELAND WRIGHT
Served this District as its Representative to the General Court 1873-1874. He was a prosperous Merchant, a wise counsellor, a generous sympathetic Friend of Those in Distress, and Foremost in all Community Work
He was a direct descendant of
Deacon John Wright of Woburn, 1640

SUSAN HASKELL DAVIS WRIGHT
Was Born Within One-Half Mile of this Spot
Before Her Marriage She Taught in All But Two School Districts of this Town. She was a Prime Factor in her Husband's Success. She was a Grand Niece of Capt. Isaac Davis shot by the British Soldiers April 19, 1775 at Concord, and a Direct Descendant in the Eighth Generation of Dolor Davis 1635, Husband of Margery Willard, Sister of Major Simon Willard of Concord Who Bought Much Land From the Indians in this Vicinity.

ACTON HIGH SCHOOL
Completed A. D. 1926
Building Committee

William Rawitser	W. Stuart Allen
George A. Richardson	Frank Toohey
Waldo E. Whitcomb	Edgar Hall

Architect — John H. Bickford
Builders — Duncan Construction Co.
John F. Cabeen

THE BRONZE LANTERNS
Are Given
In Loving Memory of
DAVID R. RAWITSER
By
His Parents.

Upstairs are the following:
Room 12 and Room 11, Sophomore Home Room and Junior Home Room:

The Furnishings
of
These two East Rooms
Are Given in Memory of
VARNUM TUTTLE
1823 - 1904
A Life Long Resident of the
TOWN OF ACTON

Room, 10 Senior Home Room:

This Room is Furnished
In Memory of
EMERY W. CLARK
1870 - 1923
Valedictorian of the class of 1886
The first class graduated from
THE ACTON HIGH SCHOOL

Front Rooms, used by Grades VII and VIII:

The Furnishings of these Rooms
Are in Memory of
FREDERICK C. NASH
Formerly Superintendent of Schools For
The Town of Acton
and
CLARA HAPGOOD NASH
In Her Youth a Teacher

West Room, No. 15:

The Furnishings of this Room were given
in Memory of
DELETTE H. HALL
1843 - 1920
Served through the Civil War in
Co. E. 26th Regiment Mass. Vol. Inf.

With General Butler in the Gulf Department
and with General Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley
1861 - 1865
A Loyal Soldier and an honored citizen
Representative to the General Court 1906
and
SUSAN A. WETHERBEE HALL
1844 - 1922

The Library and Reading Rooms:

LIBRARY AND READING ROOM
A Memorial to
1831 LUTHER CONANT 1922
and his wife

Northwest Room:

This Room is Furnished In Memory of
1728 COLONEL FRANCIS FAULKNER 1805
Upright In Character, Wise In Counsel, Faithful in Service
Member Of Provincial Congress 1774, Colonel of Middlesex
Regiment 1775
Delegate To Constitutional Convention 1779
Representative To The General Court 1783-1785

As Chairman Of The Committee Of Safety His Signal Gun Was Fired Three Times Before Daybreak April 19, 1775, Which Signal Was Repeated From Every Farm House The Sounds Growing Fainter In The Distance. The Acton Minute-Men Assembled At The Faulkner And Davis Homesteads, Then Marched With Captain Davis To Concord Bridge.

In Peace He Was A Leading Citizen In All Public Interests. He Developed At The Faulkner Mills, South Acton, One Of The Earliest Cloth Mills Of This Country. The Wool, After Carding, Was Distributed To The Homes For Spinning And Weaving, Then Returned To The Mill For Fulling, Dyeing, And Dressing. Prizes Were Awarded For The Finest Specimens In Home Made Broadcloth.

And His Grandson
1805 COLONEL WINTHROP E. FAULKNER 1880
Member Of The State Senate 1853-1854
Director Of The Fitchburg Railroad 1855-1872
Genial, Hospitable, Public-Spirited, A Leader In The Military,
Musical, Social, And Civic Activities Of Acton.
Given By His Daughter In 1926
SOPHIA FAULKNER CAMPBELL

No better opportunity than this will present itself for a commentary concerning Sophia Faulkner Campbell, the donor of the tablet just mentioned. It is a curious turn of circumstance, in view of the activity of her ancestors in the events of the Revolution, that she should have attained to the British peerage. Born Sophia Elizabeth Faulkner on October 14, 1848[1] she married Dr. Francis J. Campbell, LLD, FRGS of London on February 18, 1875.

Dr. Campbell was a native of Tennessee. He lost his sight at the age of three and at the age of ten went to a school for the blind in Nashville. After growing to manhood he taught at Bridgewater and in Wisconsin and was for eleven years the head of the Music Department of the Perkins Institute for the Blind. Subsequently he went to London where his ability enabled him to become the head and the originator of the Royal Normal College and Academy of Music for the Blind at Norwood. His ingenuity and amazing success revolutionized the English methods of teaching the blind and eventually earned him a knighthood.

After his demise Lady Campbell returned to her native land and lived in Newton from whence her body was brought to Woodlawn for burial in June of 1933.

On April 19, 1925 Acton celebrated the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Concord Fight with proper ceremonies. The committee in charge consisted of Miss Charlotte Conant, Mr. Murray Brown, Mr. George A. Richardson, Mr. Allen Brooks Parker, and Mr. Theron Lowden. This committee was subsequently augmented by some fifteen others.[2]

Public exercises instead of being held on the Common as planned were, because of unusually severe and chilly weather, held in the town hall at two o' clock. Governor Alvin T. Fuller, Hon. John F. Fitzgerald (who married Josephine Hannon of South Acton), and Rev. Frederick Brooks Noyes were present and made addresses. An overflow meeting for the children was held in the Congregational Church with special exercises. Although the Governor was expected to appear at a meeting in Medford that same afternoon he remained long enough to speak to the children. Previous to his remarks in the town hall he placed a wreath upon the grave of Capt. Isaac Davis and gave a brief talk to the minute men assembled upon the Common.

This company of minute men consisted of about one hundred men uniformed as Revolutionary soldiers. The next day it held an honored position in the parade at Concord and received great

[1] The records are in conflict as to the date of her birth. Acton vital statistics give it as Oct. 14, 1848 whereas the Acton town report for 1933 cites the death date at June 18, 1933 and states her age as eighty seven years and two months which would make the birth year 1846. The monument in Woodlawn shows the date Oct. 14, 1849.

[2] For full particulars see page 100 of the town report of 1925.

applause. Among its members were several who had been in the Acton company organized for the Concord celebration of 1875.

On the afternoon of the same day Vice-President Dawes and his suite came to Acton upon invitation of the committee and placed a wreath upon the Davis tomb. By some happy circumstance the ill weather that had prevailed for two days suddenly broke just before the Vice-President arrived and made his visit much the pleasanter.

In 1926 Mr. George V. Mead and his wife purchased and presented to the town the triangle of ground in West Acton that is now identified as Sidney Edwards Square. The bronze tablet on the huge field stone bears the following inscription:

This plot of land
presented to the Town of Acton by
GEORGE VARNUM MEAD
and
EFFIE WRIGHT MEAD

> The road on the north side of this lot was the old Indian Trail and first colony road in this vicinity and connected Acton Center with Stow — on this road travelled many citizen soldiers on their way to Concord April 19, 1775 — about one and one half miles east of this point was the house of Capt. Isaac Davis.

The Indian trail mentioned was very probably the same one cited by Crowell in his *History of Stow* as that which led from the Indian settlement in Natick up through Stow to Nashoba.

Sidney John Edwards for whom the square is named was born in Barnstable, Devonshire, England, December 11, 1878. He came to this country when about fourteen months old and lived in West Acton until he was fourteen years of age, at which time the family moved to Winchester, Mass. He enlisted in the 30th Battalion at Victoria, British Columbia on November 1, 1914, proceeded overseas to England February 23, 1915 where he transferred to the 15th Battalion and proceeded to France May 16, 1915 and was reported killed fighting gallantly five days later on May 21, 1915. He received the Canadian Silver Memorial Cross, the British Silver War Medal and the Victory Medal in Bronze, and also the 1914-15 Bronze Star.

In March of 1926 the seventh and eighth grades were transferred to the rooms prepared for them in the high school building. The children were thereby grouped into single grades under one teacher thus evening up the work for the whole town. The teachers were Ella L. Miller, Mary Branley and Olive Valente.

During the year the state released the town from the Littleton, Acton, Carlisle Union in consequence of which Mr. Charles W.

Lawrence was made superintendent as well as principal of the high school.

With June came the first graduation exercises in Acton since the year 1907. They were held in the auditorium, the address of the evening being given by Mr. Harry Gardner, Deputy Commissioner of Education of Massachusetts. The class greetings were given by Marion Fobes, the history by Sumner Teele, a vocal solo by Leona Albrecht of the faculty, and the valedictory by Alberta Hodgen. The presentation of diplomas was by Mr. Spencer Taylor, chairman of the school committee.

For purposes of reference and completeness the graduating class is listed below:

Post Graduates

Dorothy Mabel Jones
Viola Isabel Merriam
Thomas Joseph Shea
Virginia Swift

Seniors

Grace Eleanor Chickering
John Henry Ingman
John Francis Enneguess
Marion Sturtevant Fobes
Ruth Billings Fullonton
Ethel Olive Granberg
Albert Thompson Grimes
Alberta Augusta Agnes Hodgen
Charles Bradford Howe
Florence Arlene Jones
Richard Joseph O' Neal
Sumner Joseph Teele
Mildred Harris Tuttle
William Davis Tuttle
Ruth Christine Van Winkle

With September came fifteen students from Boxborough, which, together with augmented Acton numbers, brought the opening total to one hundred thirty five.

In 1928 came the test vote concerning the repeal of the eighteenth ammendment. Although acting contrary to nationwide opinion Acton remained consistent with a vote of 331 YES and 517 NO. It is an interesting fact that there were 299 blanks. In other words more than a quarter of the eleven hundred and forty seven persons who turned in ballots on state officers neglected or refused to express an opinion upon this question.

By 1931 the town had an adequate and well functioning fire department with an alarm system in each village, up-to-date pumps, and a hose and ladder truck which had been built by the South Acton fire company, and a set of fire alarm numbers allocated to the several areas of the town.

Acton has been most fortunate in the generosity of its native sons and daughters through the generations. In 1931 it was the beneficiary in two important instances. Mr. Augustine B. Conant was the prime benefactor of a group who donated to the Centre concrete sidewalks along both sides of Main Street.

The other was a bequest under the will of Miss Susan Noyes Hosmer of some eighty thousand dollars to be known as the Jeremiah Hosmer and Susan Noyes Hosmer Woodlawn Cemetery Fund. Miss Hosmer, daughter of Jeremiah Hosmer and his wife Hannah Noyes, was born in Acton in 1832 and died in Auburndale, Mass. in 1930, and was buried in Woodlawn. She lived with her brother Jeremiah, who was born in Acton in 1825 and died in Boston in 1906, and with him travelled extensively throughout their lives.

Both of these gifts were acknowledged by proper resolutions at the March meeting of 1931.

Once the high school became organized it rapidly took on all the attributes of a modern institution. Under the direction of Messers. Lawrence, Hough and Hall who functioned in that order as Superintendents new courses were added, additional faculty employed, and the physical plant and the grounds improved. With the cooperation of Mr. George Greengough the athletic field was cleared of boulders and ledge and various teams began to function. A baseball team was in operation in 1929 and also basketball for both sexes even though a hall in Maynard had to be hired for the purpose. A football team emerged in 1930 that was accorded a banquet in the Universalist vestry at the close of the season. By 1935 the various usual sports were all functioning under hired instructors and the athletic set up had all the earmarks of an urban school.

With the two hundredth birthday of the town in the offing the pressure of modern conditions had rendered the old constable method of police supervision inadequate. Consequently in 1932 Mr. Michael Foley was appointed as full time salaried officer and chief of police. Through the years he has proved to be capable, temperate and judicious in the enforcement of the law, and diligent in the interests of the community. In 1948 patrolman Edward J. Collins was added to the salaried staff and in 1951 patrolman Chauncey R. Fenton. Now, with a corps of ten, including one woman, with three on full time duty the town has twenty four hour protection which is rendered particularly efficient since the patrolmen and the central office in the town hall are part of an integrated unit operating in two-way radio contact with the forces in Concord and Maynard.

In keeping with the vogue of the era it was inevitable that Acton should have a garden club, and that a good one. On June 20th, 1934 the organizing meeting took place at the home of Mrs. Elwin Hollowell and the following charter members were inscribed on the roll: Mrs. Elwin Hollowell, Mrs. Walter Cook, Mrs. Leo Quinn, Mrs. William Tuttle, Mrs. Robert Bond, Mrs. Harold Clapp, Mrs. Oscar Howe, Mrs. George Horton, Mrs. Joseph Gagnon, Miss Lillian Frost, Mrs. Alan B. Frost.

Mrs. Harold Clapp was elected president, Mrs. Walter Cook vice-president, and Mrs. Allen B. Frost secretary. It was voted to have two meetings a month from April to October and one meeting per month for the remainder of the year. No decision was made with respect to dues.

With the passing of the years the club has thrived until now, limited to one hundred, it has members from West Concord and Concord.

Upon occasion the sons of Acton have returned to serve as orator of the evening at the annual high school commencement. Mr. Carlos Clark, son of the late Herbert T. Clark of West Acton, and brother to Mrs. Andrew Torsleff, journeyd from his home in Grosse Ile, Michigan for that purpose in 1934. His interest, however, did not cease there. He was desirous that the youth of Acton should learn of the town and have pride in its history. Consequently he presented to the high school a silver shield bearing the following inscription:

This Shield
has been placed upon these walls
in honor of
the class of 1889
of the
Acton High School
in the hope that it may stimulate the study of
Acton History in Acton Schools
and bring to the citizens of Acton a fuller realization
of the Commonwealth and the Nation.

It has been given with the stipulation that each year on Acton Day, the 19th of April, each member of the senior class shall read an original essay on Acton history and romance and that the name of the senior whose essay is adjudged the most worthy contribution to the wonderful story of Acton's men and women shall be inscribed below and the essay filed in the Wilde Memorial Library for future reference.

Mr. Carlos Blanchard Clark was born in December of 1872 and died in December of 1947. He attended Bryant and Stratton Business College, was given an honorary Master's Degree from Trinity College, was offered but did not accept a chair on the faculty of the Harvard Business School, but did return once a year for twenty years to lecture to the graduating class.

He evolved the Clark Plan for department store accounting, was with Filenes of Boston for seven years and was controller of the J. L. Hudson Company of Detroit.

He was known as the dean of the department store controllers and founded the Controllers Congress of the National Dry Goods Associ-

ation in 1920. In addition he was chairman of the Dry Goods association for twenty five years and received the first gold medal given the national association for "distinguished service to retail business".

On the national level he was chairman of the tax committee of the National Retail Dry Goods Association and assisted in an advisory capacity in writing some of the tax laws during the Hoover administration. In World War I he was a dollar-a-year advisor to the United States Treasury Department and in World War II it was he who devised the plan whereby department stores could sell bonds, for which service he was cited by the federal government.

In the academic world he was for many years on the advisory committee of Simmons College.

While this volume was in process of being printed Mr. Clark was awarded additional national recognition by being elected, upon the recommendation of members of the Boston Chamber of Commerce, to the Hall of Fame in Distribution.

With the arrival of 1935 two centuries had passed into the maw of time since Acton, in town meeting assembled, chose its first corps of officers. Through the march of the years some of the family names, once so numerous on the town records, have persisted but others have vanished entirely. The names of Barker, Billings, Brooks, Dudley, Fletcher, Harris, Hayward, Jones, Piper, Robbins, Wheeler, and White still claim a place in community affiairs but no voices now make response for Brabrook, Barnes, Cragin, Forbush, Faulkner, Heald, Hunt, Lamson, Parlin, Procter, or Wooley except those that have come down through the female members of the lines.

Diverse causes have brought this about. In the days when medicine was less effective it not infrequently occured that childhood epidemics wiped out all the offspring in a family. Upon occasion all the male children departed for the enticing acres of the western country to there remain. In some instances, due to quirks of mind or lack of social opportunity, a family withered away as a group of spinsters and bachelors. Lastly, some, having married, remained childless or begat solely daughters.

Concomitant with the procession of the years came alterations in the structure of the town government. New England has been particularly tenacious of the outward forms of community action but minor changes could not be stayed. New agencies had to come into being with a dynamic society. In this connection it seems desirable to list the more important town officers as they were at the conclusion of two hundred years.

Moderator
Albert P. Durkee
Selectmen
Ralph W. Piper, Waldo E. Whitcomb, George S. Braman
Town Clerk
Horace F. Tuttle
Town Treasurer
William Henry Soar
Assessors
Albert P. Durkee, Henry L. Haynes, Warren H. Jones
Collector of Taxes,
Charles A. Durkee
Tree Warden
James J. Knight
Board of Welfare
Carl E. Backman, Bertram D. Hall, Frank S. Braman
Cemetery Commissioners
Fred W. Green, Wendell F. Davis, H. F. Tuttle
School Committee
Samuel E. Knowlton, Lulu H. Clark, Randall N. Woodworth,
Louisa N. Wood, Albertie M. Mead, Everett N. Montague
Trustees of Memorial Library
J. Sidney White, Frank A. Merriam, Horace F. Tuttle
Board of Health
Raymond F. Durkee, Frank E. Tasker, George H. Tuttle
Trustees of Elizabeth White Fund
Warren H. Jones, Waldo E. Whitcomb, Charlotte Conant
Trustees of West Acton Firemen's Relief Fund
Arnold H. Perkins, H. Stuart MacGregor, A. N. Hederstedt
Trustees of Goodnow Fund
Charles E. Smith, Charlotte Conant, Horace F. Tuttle
Finance Committee
Murray Brown, Wiliam T. Merriam, Alfred W. Davis, Webster
S. Blanchard, Albert P. Durkee, Howard J. Billings
Superintendent of Streets
Albert S. Perkins
Town Accountant
Howard L. Jones
Registrars of Voters
Daniel W. Sheehan, Edwin A. Phalen, Clarence D. Pickering,
Horace F. Tuttle
Fire Engineers
H. Stuart MacGregor, chief; Alan B. Frost, David C. Clayton,
A. Haselton Perkins

Cattle Inspector
Fred S. Whitcomb
Forest Warden
Alan B. Frost
Dog Officer
Arthur Fraser
Sealer of Weights and Measures
Clare Milbery
Superintendent of Town Forest
Charles A. Durkee
Surveyors of Wood and Lumber
Bertram D. Hall, Charles E. Smith, George H. Reed
Field Drivers
Michael Foley, Alan B. Frost, George H. Braman
Superintendent of Moth Work
James J. Knight
Police Officers
Michael Foley, chief; George A. Braman, Alan B. Frost,
Charles A. Durkee

The town expenses in the two hundred year interim had grown beyond recognition. Whereas Acton's first school appropriation was about the equivalent of one hundred dollars that for 1935 was forty three thousand five hundred. Other considerable items among a long list were as follows: roads $12,000, street lighting $3500, general government $5500, public welfare $7000, old age assistance $8000, snow removal $8000, police $2500, fire department $2800, and public health nurse $2200.

Just previous to the annual meeting of 1935 an event took place that was unique in the annals of the town. Mr. Howard Billings was concluding nine years of exceptionally adequate service as selectman and eight years as a member of the Board of Public Welfare. In recognition of his outstanding conduct in these offices the Edwards-Quimby Post, the Women's Auxiliary, and the town officials assembled in a packed town hall on the evening of February 11th to do him honor.

The 13th U. S. Infantry Band from Fort Devens gave an hour's concert after which Commander T. Charles Gallagher opened the meeting and Rev. A. E. Becket of the South Acton Congregational church offered the prayer.

Thereupon Sgt. at Arms Harry Croft escorted Mr. Billings to the platform and presented to him the first American Legion Medal of Honor for meritorious service to Community, State, or Nation to be awarded in Massachusetts.

The speeches of the evening were given by Major Charles S. Coulter, Representative Edward Cain of Framingham, Representative John Valentine of Chelmsford, and Senator George Moyse of Waltham.

As might be expected Acton celebrated the two hundredth anniversary of its birth with all proper ceremonies. Plans had been set in motion a year previous by the appointment of a large and able committee,[1] and the date had been set for July 20-22.

At sunrise on the morning of Saturday, the first day, the festivities were ushered in with the firing of salutes, ringing of all the town bells, and the announcing by town criers of the program of the day, in particular the big military and civic parade of the afternoon.

Major Charles S. Coulter, United States Army, retired, a resident of Acton, was chief marshal and led the parade on horseback. The procession, in three divisions, marched from South Acton to West Acton and was then transported to the Centre, there to reform and finish the line of march at the school house.

The marshal of the first division was George L. Towne, aged ninety two, commander and last living member of Isaac Davis Post, G. A. R., with T. Charles Gallagher of the local Edwards-Quimby Post of the American Legion as adjutant. There was a detachment of the United States Marines in line together with National Guard outfits from Waltham, Concord, Hudson and Clinton, and eighteen Army trucks from Fort Devens, used in transporting the troops from West Acton to the Centre, bringing up the rear. The 13th United States Infantry Band furnished the music for the division.

The second division was led by Lowell H. Cram of the American Legion Post as Marshal, together with the Watertown American Legion Band. This division included some thirty floats, decorated automobiles, and commercial vehicles.

The third division, with Past Commander O. L. Clark of the Legion Post as marshal, included the local American Legion Post, the veterans of foreign wars, and various animal drawn vehicles. Outstanding among these was a hack of a former era drawn by a pair of horses in tandem.

Subsequent to the completion of the parade there were speeches from a specially erected platform in front of the town hall with President of the Day, Howard J. Billings, presiding.

Just preceding the speaking Mr. Billings read the following communication from the White House in Washington.

[1] Horace F. Tuttle, chairman; Waldo E. Whitcomb, George S. Braman, Ralph W. Piper, Vice-chairman; Webster S. Blanchard, Treasurer; Clara L. Sawyer, Secretary; Mrs. Hobart Mead, Mrs. Stuart Allen and Henry Tolman.

This group was subsequently augmented by more than twenty other sub-committees.

THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON

July 10, 1935

To the People of Acton:

My acquaintance with the town of Acton extends over a considerable portion of my own lifetime, and it was a sense of being honored by an old friend that I reiceived an invitation to address a message to the "Citizens of Acton" on the occasion of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Founding of the Town.

I am sure that in looking back over those years you have very much in mind just now the gallant services of Captain Isaac Davis and the other men of Acton at the Battle of Concord. The sacrifice which they made is characteristic of the vigor and courage with which the men of the colonies rose to defend their rights.

It is to the particular and everlasting glory of Acton that from her peaceful farms came such early and vital response to the demands for heroic action.

I am sure that the stalwart qualities of that earlier day are still with you, even though our present problems are of a different sort.

I congratulate you upon your past and send you my best wishes for your future.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Governor James M. Curley of Massachusetts was then introduced. After the Governor's speech, an address was made by Hon. John F. Fitzgerald, ex-mayor of Boston, whose wife was a native of South Acton. Other speakers were Hon. John H. Valentine of Chelmsford, Representative of the eleventh Middlesex District, Rev. Frederick Brooks Noyes of Belmont and an Acton native who was born in the house now owned by Mr. Howard Billings, Mr. Harold R. Phalen, and Mr. Nelson Tenny of Acton. Mr. Leonard D. White, who was also listed to appear as another native son, was obliged to be absent due to illness.

The literary portion of the day's exercises was completed with the presentation of the poem "ACTON SPEAKS" by Miss Florence Piper Tuttle.

ACTON SPEAKS

I am the Acton which your fathers planned with pride,
Those humble folk, who toiled to clear the land,
And build their simple homes here, side by side,
Living as neighbors should. With willing hand

They shared their work, their joys, their ills that you
Among my peaceful hills might long abide,
Doing the work God willed that you should do.

Then hostile whisperings of power and greed,
And thought of paying toll to Britian's king,
Caused all our patriot hearts to smart and bleed;
When Freedom spoke and said, "I am your King".
The challenge echoed through the nightly air,
Till Davis bravely sensed the hour of need,
And led our men in answer to our prayer.

Then everyone of Acton's Minute Men, —
Those men who'd never faced a foe before, —
Unwavering stood the enemy's fire. 'Twas then
That Davis fell, and with him fell two more;
Great souls that nobly died that we'd be free,
A sacrifice that stirred in hearts of men,
Plans for a nation that was yet to be.

A granite pile enshrines their dust today,
Lifting its proud head to the azure skies;
That God's sweet light of peace may about it play,
Till all the glories of the past shall rise, —
Courage and valor, dignity and truth,
Dreams of a nobler and a better day, —
A heritage indeed, for Acton's youth.

On Sunday, the second day, the morning hours were set apart for attendance at the several churches of the town according to the wishes of individuals.

From two to six in the afternoon the following old houses were open for inspection.[1]

Acton Centre
- Rev. Frederick Brooks Noyes (1790)
- Miss Charlotte Conant (1791)
- Mrs. Elizabeth Crocker, The old parsonage (1780)

Mohawk Trail Road
- Mr. and Mrs. Frank Peters (1791)
- Mr. and Mrs. Chester Robbins (1735)
- Mrs. Hope Holland (1762)

South Acton
- Faulkner House, The old garrison house (previous to 1735)
- Mr. and Mrs. John Bradley (Sally Bright House, 1775)

[1] The above is not a complete list of Acton's old and interesting houses. For additional data one should consult Fletcher and see the book of photographs by by Mr. Ernest H. Washburn in the Memorial Library.

Dr. and Mrs. Randall M. Woodworth (Winthrop Conant place, 1735)
Jones Tavern (1735)
Miss Mary Lothrop (1762)

West Acton
Mrs. Sarah French Tavern (1770)
Mrs. Genevieve Creeley (1756)
Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Gates (1790)
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Haynes, (Deacon Benjamin Hayward,1735)

The late afternoon hours were given over to a concert on the Common by the E. R. A. orchestra upon which occasion there were rendered a number of selections by Acton's one musician of national repute, Mr. Lucius Hosmer.

Mr. Hosmer was the son of musical parents, his father being bandmaster of the local band and chorister of the church choir in which the mother also took a prominent part. When he was twelve the family moved to Charlestown whereupon the young Lucius began his studies at the New England Conservatory. There he first studied harmony with J. B. Claus and later took theory, counterpoint, and composition under the renowned George W. Chadwick. His first compositions were for the clarinet, upon which he was proficient but later he turned his attention to the violin and the organ, leading a theatre orchestra in Boston and serving as organist in one of the metropolitan churches.

In his early composing his metier seemed to be in the field of humor since his two comic operas "The Walking Delegate" and "The Rose of Alhambra" were distinct successes, the latter touring the country for two years including a run at the Belasco theatre in New York. His greater fame came, however, from his shorter compositions, which became immensely popular with musicians, particularly with the bands of Sousa and Pryor. Upon one occasion the Edison Symphony Orchestra of Chicago gave an entire program at Orchestra Hall that was broadcast throughout the country.

Mr. Hosmer was denied the privilege of attending the Acton celebration since his death occurred just a month and a half previous. His remains were brought to Mt. Hope Cemetery for interment.

The orchestra concert of the second day was followed by evening outdoor worship, the call being made by Rev. G. W. Douglas of the Centre Congregational church. The speaker of the evening, Dr. Ashley Day Leavitt of Brookline, was introduced by Rev. A. E. Beckett of the South Acton Congregational Church.

On the morning of the third day there was an automobile tour, conducted by Mr. Arthur F. Davis, over the route taken by the Minute Men to Concord. The group met at the high school and then repaired

via Charter Rd. and Hayward Rd. to the Isaac Davis homestead, thence to the site of the home of Rev. John Swift, along Maple Ave. to the Fair Grounds, to the Centre School and via Brook Street to Strawberry Hill Rd. and the Barrett Mill Rd. to Concord.

At five thirty in the afternoon there was presented on the Fair Grounds the most pretentious pageant ever attempted by Acton residents. It was written by Miss Evelyn A. Knowlton, a descendent of Jonathan Hosmer, selectman, town clerk, assessor, schoolmaster and prominent churchman of the era of the town's inception.[1] It was directed by Robert S. Bancroft of the John B. Rogers Producing Company. It consisted of four episodes each consisting of several scenes. The time span extended from the first meeting of the white settlers with the Indians to the Civil War and thereafter. The climactic scene showed the SPIRIT OF ACTON reviewing her past and being inspired by the SPIRIT OF PEACE to look toward the future.
According to the program more than one hundred and fifty persons took part in the pageant in diverse capacities. The major actors, several of whom were descendents of the characters they represented, were as follows:

SPIRIT OF ACTON	Miss Elizabeth R. Hall
Rev. John Eliot	Rev. Arthur J. Jefferies
John Heald	Harlan Tuttle
Rev. John Swift, as a young man,	Rev. Arthur E. Becket
Capt. Isaac Davis	Francis Mead
Abner Hosmer	Dr. Roscoe Hosmer Knowlton
James Hayward	George Hayward
Clerk Joseph Piper	Ralph Piper
Luther Blanchard, fifer	Webster S. Blanchard
Rev. John Swift, as an old man	Rev. A. J. Torsleff
Mrs. Isaac Davis	Mrs. Sue Newport
Rev. James Trask Woodbury	Walter Cook
Rev. Robert Stinson	Charles Allen
Capt. Daniel Tuttle	Arthur Tuttle
Col. Winthrop Faulkner	Harold Merriam
Dr. Harris Cowdrey	W. Stuart Allen
SPIRIT OF PEACE	Miss Doris Graves

One Acton native and resident who had a most unusual connection with the anniversary exercises was Mrs. Luella Smith Mott, whose grandfather, Solomon Smith, was in Davis' company at Concord Bridge. Mrs. Mott, aged sixty six at the time of the celebration, was, so far as has ever been discovered, the only person then alive in

[1] See Appendices III, IV, V, IX.

the United States who could claim a grandfather who was a participant in the Revolution at any stage, to say nothing of one who fought in its first engagement.[1]

The opportunity must not be neglected to make some comment concerning one of the local speakers at the celebration, namely, Mr. Nelson Tenney. Every rural town has its colorful characters and one such Mr. Tenney was beyond all doubt.

Mention has already been made of Mr. Hoar and his all service vise. Tenney was another of the town's indefatigable inventors — in fact he was the personification of the typical Yankee gadget maker. He was forever experimenting. Before central heating had become at all general locally the Tenney steam boiler was in operation in a number of Acton houses. It was cumbersome and not a thing of beauty, particularly since it required a brick casing, but in the field of coal burning units it was a marvel of efficiency. Operated with hard coal it would warm any respectably tight house in zero weather with nothing more than a faint glow showing on the surface of the fire. Slicker models, promoted by more potent sales agents and advertising, replaced it but at the end of a tough winter none were kindlier on the pocketbook.

Quite apart from this mechanical ability he was a master with the unique idiom and a natural homespun orator of no mean ability. He had a slight speech defect which caused him to haul for breath at amazing places in his remarks. To the uninitiated the effect could be quite surprising. This bothered him not at all, in fact he used it skillfully to give punch to certain pithy asides that caused more than one uproar in the course of his town meeting polemics.

In private conversation he was well read, bubbling with humor, and loaded with anecdotes of Acton personnel that while not always complimentary were highly entertaining. Those who knew him well and conversed with him often could not fail to absorb a mass of unpublished Actonaria.

He delighted in demonstrations of ready wit and unconscious humor. One specimen that always amused him hugely was the following. It appears that during the time when John MacPherson functioned as the blacksmith at the shop now owned by Mr. Gates, one of the village ne'er-do-wells was loafing as usual when a local farmer renowned for his potent sarcasm, came to have his horses shod. Eventually a funeral passed, having in the procession two carriages heavily loaded with flowers. With every evidence of immense self pity the loafer made the observation that when he died

[1] Solomon Smith (1753-1837) begat at the age of sixty Luke Smith (1813-1899) who in turn at the age of fifty six begat Luella Smith Mott (1869-1945). Mr. Otis Mott, the husband, is not a native of Acton, but is, as of the present, a sprightly town character in his late nineties.

"there wouldn't be any flowers". Thereupon the farmer, in characteristic manner, and without an instant's hesitation came out with the following questionable bit of solace. "I'll promise ye one thing. If I'm alive and thar's any skunk cabbage er piz'n ivy, ye'll git plenty".

He was a combination of surpassing mechanic, able businessman, loyal Actonian and plain boy. He loved a sly prank. In the days when the celebration of the Fourth of July was both unsafe and insane the haggard citizens used to wonder after a night of horrendous din how the gay blades of the town assembled so many potent engines of concussion. Only years later did it leak out that anon diverse lengths of steel shafting went to the Tenny machine shop to be there bored with both his knowledge and his benison. He believed in America and thought its birthday was worth celebrating.[1]

It was charateristic of him that he should have owned the first phonograph in town. In those days only a consummate mechanic could make one behave. Even so the little demonstration that he gave one evening in the town hall had to be interrupted a couple of times while he cured the contraption of balky spells.

Likewise was it typical that he should have bought the site of the old Robbins saw mill and erected a trim little building in the hope that thereby he could use the water power to provide for Acton cheap electricity. The present residence of Mr. Stuart Allen is the metamorphosed Tenny mill.

He had for years as his most treasured workman an individual almost his equal as a mechanical wizard. This man, George Daniels by name, came from Peterborough, New Hampshire, and so much resembled the then renowned financier Jay Gould that the nickname was immediately clapped upon him with such effect that he well nigh lost his identity. Many in town knew him by no other name. Even mail came to him so addressed. He lived a sort of hermit's existence in a wee shanty on River Street which he built just large enough to shelter his bed and his unique self-made automobile. The story of this temperamental vehicle is a saga in itself but space will not permit. The curious reader is referred to Mr. Benjamin Sawyer who as an old time Tenny workman must have been around for the conception and birth of that amazing product of the mechanic's art.

Eventually there was erected in South Acton by a large and somewhat pontifical gentleman an imposing residence bearing over the entrance the sign "SUNSHINE VILLA". Not long thereafter there appeared over Jay's front and only door the legend "MOONSHINE VILLA". Although Mr. Tenny would never admit any complicity in this bit of foolery nevertheless he did not deny it and very few felt that Jay had the turn of mind to devise any such satirical trick alone.

[1] Now the SIR STEAK plant on Massachusetts Ave.

It had too much of the touch of the master jester in it.

As we come to the consideration of the years intervening since 1935 it becomes increasingly difficult to select the topics for consideration. Acton began its third century much in the frame of mind of a lusty country youth just outgrowing all his clothes, and amazed at the sight of his burgeoning stature and at the unfamiliar urges stirring within him. The town had begun to attract new residents in numbers. Hence the story must deal with growing pains and with readjustments to new civic outlooks.

All this means trouble for the author. It is difficult to put period to the biography of an atomb bomb while it is in the process of exploding. Modern society has become so complex that events that would have supplied the writer with pages of copy a century ago now merely bore the reader. From the time one of Acton's commuter citizens rises in the morning to the sound of his electric alarm clock until he leaves for work in his modern car he has performed a score of miracles unheard of by his great grandfather. He who would be a scribe must perforce choose those topics that appear to have some bearing on the future shape of events, with now and then a bit of spicing in the form of routine matters that although unimportant in themselves throw light on the local temper and attitudes.

In its new personality the town has made and will make mistakes both of commission and omission but these will be recognized and corrected. Some of the old and desirable customs will fade but never, may we pray, shall Acton become so involved in the present that it will, as happened in the case of a certain Connecticut community of the same age as venerable Sudbury, by-pass its three hundredth anniversary by several weeks before anyone awoke to the fact.

For decades the woodlot facing Concord Street just north of Woodlawn Cemetery stood as an untouched forest. Frequently the remark was made that in due course it might well become a convenient adjunct when Woodlawn needed to expand, but in those days the reality seemed to be something far in the future. No one could then see how Acton was to expand or envision how popular Woodlawn was to become as a place of interment for out of town persons who were attracted by its natural beauty and efficient maintenance.

All of a sudden events transpired rapidly. At a special town meeting convened August 17, 1936 a series of associated articles came before the citizens for consideration. The first was to see if the town would accept from Mrs. Sarah Albertine Watson, as of her offer of the June previous, a conveyance of the aforementioned woodlot with the stipulation that it be forever used as an addition to Woodlawn subject to certain other conditions, namely, that there be built upon the lot a mortuary chapel in pursuance of clause C of item twenty six of the

will of Mrs. Georgia E. Whitney and that the town accept the balance, if any, as a trust fund the income of which was to be used to beautify the cemetery.

The town accepted unanimously all the conditions and empowered the Cemetery Commissioners to represent the town in all matters pertaining to the conveyance and to the erection of the chapel.

At the same meeting there was also accepted from Mrs. Whitney an additional fund of ten thousand dolars the interest of which was to be used for the relief of needy poor of South Acton, preferably elderly persons, with the proviso that the distribution be made unostentatiously so that the names of the beneficiaries might not become known.

Pursuant of the foregoing acts the following was passed:

> *Voted: That the town of Acton place on record its appreciation and thanks for the generous gifts under the will of the late Georgia E. Whitney and her sister, Mrs. Sarah A. Watson, for the rare public spirit in providing benefits to the town and its citizens. Also to recognize the unselfish interest shown by Mrs. Watson and her sister for the welfare of their native town for many years past, and the provisions for the future.*

These two women who were so generous and thoughtful were the daughters of Mr. Varnum Tuttle, one of the prominent partners of the merchandizing concern of Tuttle, Jones and Wetherbee of South Acton. Mr. Tuttle was born in Acton in 1823 and married Sarah L. Kieth, also a native, on May 6, 1849. Georgia Tuttle, the elder sister, was born December 9, 1854, married Walter H. Whitney, spent all her married life in Somerville, and died June 17, 1925. Sarah Albertine Tuttle, the younger sister, was born March 19, 1864, married Oliver Watson, who also lived in Somerville, died in 1931, and was buried in Woodlawn. Mrs. Watson, now in the late eighties, lives in Harvard and has taken an active interest in the preparation of the portion of the manuscript relating to the erection of the chapel.

The edifice itself, built of Chelmsford granite by D. F. and W. G. Burns under the direction of architect H. Thaxter Underwood, was formally dedicated on the afternoon of June 19th, 1938. With Mr. William E. Zeuch at the organ, assisted by the Temple Quartette, the ceremonies were simple but impressive. Rev. Arthur H. Wilde of the Baptist Church offered the invocation. Mr. Amos L. Taylor presented the chapel to the town on behalf of the trustees of the Whitney estate. Mr. Horace F. Tuttle accepted on behalf of the Cemetery Commissioners. There were two addresses, one by Rev. Amel W. Whitwer of the South Acton Congregational Church and another by Rev. Glenn W. Douglas of the Centre Congregational Church. Rev. Norman L. Kellert of the South Acton Universalist Church pronounced the benediction.

The printed program of the exercises states specifically that the "*Acton Memorial Chapel is erected in appreciation of the comfort of the Gospel, and in the faith of life after death, and the glorious hope of immortality, a chapel for the free use of all who may desire it, for the observance of burial rites for those whose bodies are to be interred in Woodlawn*".

Within the building two tablets bear the following inscriptions:

This chapel given to
town of Acton
by
Georgia Etta Whitney
erected under direction
of trustees
S. Alberte Watson
&
Amos L. Taylor

This chapel
erected in memory of
Varnum Tuttle
1823 - 1904
&
Walter H. Whitney
1849 - 1906

At the March meeting of 1937 one of the town's growing pains began to become acute when the question of a consolidated elementary school at Kelley's Corner came before the electorate. The net result of the discussion was that the moderator appointed Harold Clapp, Walter M. Cook, and Edward L. Pendergast as a committee to confer with the school committee upon the matter.

In October a special town meeting voted to borrow the necessary money by 128 to 98. It was also decided to draw up a set of building laws. This action stirred up interest to such an extent that at a meeting on November 1 a motion to raise and borrow $100,000 for a consolidated school, although it failed to be backed by the necessary two thirds, did obtain a very favorable consideration of 339 to 192, thereby falling short by only fifteen votes. Another try on August 1, 1938 brought out a much smaller percentage of the citizenry and was far less successful, the vote being 168 to 167. The closeness of this vote showed that Acton "was at it again"on a major issue.

Thereafter the project lay fallow and before it was resurrected the war years were upon the nation. It was not until 1946 that a three line paragraph in the report of the chairman of the school committee

expressed the hope that the citizens would keep in mind the need for a consolidated elementary school.

In 1950 a special board, known as the regional school district planning board, consisting of Charles V. Sturdevant, Orwald E. Kienow, and Alden C. Flagg, was created and instructed to report at a special town meeting to be held not later than December of 1950. At the same time Charles A. Christofferson, Marion C. Reed, Porter Jenks, Thomas Motley 2nd., and Burton C. Jones, Jr. were put on a special school building committee to investigate the design, construction, site, costs, et cetera and report not later than December 1950.

Pursuant of the above outlined plans the two committees worked diligently and reported at a special town meeting convened on December 18, 1950. Although no action was taken in either case the reports were of major importance and are given in outline below since they must of necessity form the nucleus of any further progress in the matter.

The special building committee presented the following findings:

1. *The existing school buildings, including the present High School, will provide adequate space and facilities for grades* 1 *to* 8 *until sometime subsequent to* 1960.
2. *The enrollment in grades* 9 *to* 12 *will be in excess of* 325 *by* 1960.
3. *That a high school having an enrollment in excess of three hundred can be operated at a reasonable cost and provide a good high school curriculum.*
4. *That a new high school building containing adequate educational and athletic facilities can be constructed at a reasonable cost to the town; provided that the State Aid will be granted for a local High School.*

In view of the above facts the committee recommended that the town engage the services of a person or persons experienced in making school population studies to make a survey to determine the probable enrollment in grades 9 to 12 inclusive for the years 1959 to 1964 and that the sum of two thousand dollars be appropriated for the purpose; that the committee submit the results of the survey to the State School Building Assistance Commission to obtain approval and State Aid for erecting a suitable high school building; and that a special town meeting be called, as soon as such approval is obtained, for the purpose of authorizing the construction of a new high school building.

The Regional School District Planning Board above mentioned consisted of members from the towns of Acton, Bolton, Boxborough, Harvard, Lancaster, and Stow. Mr. Charles V. Sturdevant, originally

appointed as a member of the school committee resigned and Eleanore H. Hollis served in his place.

The report of the complete committee, dated from Harvard, Mass. as of January 17, 1951 is fulsome, ten pages in all, and can be found on page 173 of the 1950 town report. It is needless to give it here in detail.

It will be sufficient to state that the eleven sections of the report cover the items of the selection of the regional district school committee, the location of the school building, the type of building, the method of apportioning costs, transportation, admission and withdrawal from the district, ammendments, budgets, admission of students, organization of the regional school commitee, and the organization of the regional school district.

The three appended tables show that of the total valuation of the six towns Acton was the largest with 34.29 per cent. It also had the largest net average membership, namely 32.77 per cent. To arrive at the calculation of the share of each town the technique was to double the valuation percentage, add the membership percentage and divide by three. By this means it developed that the percentage shares of the six towns were as follows: Acton 33.78; Bolton 9.79; Boxborough 3.62; Harvard 17.57; Lancaster 22.05; Stow 13.19.

The conclusion of the planning board was summarized below.

The Regional School District Planning Board established by the towns of Acton, Bolton, Boxborough, Harvard, Lancaster and Stow in accordance with Chapter 638 *of the Acts of* 1949 *of the General Laws has studied the advisability of establishing a Regional School District for all or part of the above towns. The said boards finds it desirable, and in the best interest of the above towns, their taxpayers, and their children of school age, to establish such a Regional School District, and hereby recommends that the above towns forthwith express their wishes in the matter.*

The Regional School District Planning Board urgently recommends to the above towns and their Setectmen that a Regional School District be established and herewith submits a copy of the proposed agreement between the member towns. Copies of this agreement have been submitted to the emergency finance board and the department of education who have indicated their approval of the agreement and the proposed Regional School District by affixing their signatures to the agreement.

We therefore request that in accordance with Chapter 638 *of the Acts of* 1949 *the board of Selectmen ot*

Acton direct the Town Clerk of Acton to cause the following question to be placed on the official ballot used for the election of town officials for the election to be held Monday, March 5, 1951:—

"Shall Acton accept the provisions of sections sixteen to sixteen I, inclusive, of chapter seventy-one of the General Laws, providing for the establishment of a regional school district, together with the towns of Bolton, and/or Boxborough, and/or Harvard, and/or Lancaster, and/or Stow, and the construction, maintenance and operation of a regional school by the said district in accordance with the provisions of a proposed agreement filed with the Selectmen?"

YES

NO

Frank Wigglesworth
Chairman, Regional School District Planning Board

Eleanore H. Hollis
Board Member from Acton

Orwald E. Kienow
Board Member from Acton

Alden C. Flagg, Jr.
Board Member from Acton

Since 1950 the school situation has been in constant flux due to the interlocking details of the town's needs, the problem of the consolidated school, the Blanchard Auditorium, and the necessary legal steps involved in financing. The end is not yet, and prophesy is vain so the writer will close the topic by paraphrasing from the statement of Superintendent Whitman Pearson in the last town report.

September of 1952 found the local school system six classrooms short of the number required for its seven hundred students. The two shift plan had been envisioned but was avoided by making use of the following facilities:

West Acton Second Grade.....Roosevelt School, Maynard
South Acton Second Grade.....Coolidge School, Maynard
Center First Grade.....Center Church Sunday School Room
Center Third Grade.....Center Fire House
South Acton Fourth Grade.....Acton Center Women's Club
Third Section High School.....Converted High School
Seventh Grade.....Library

This arrangement was upset by the fire which destroyed the Wilson

School in Maynard, necessitating the termination of the two schoolroom renting agreement with Maynard which now needed all its available space. Improvisation again made it possible to avoid the two shift system for the West and South Grades when through the cooperation of Mr. Porter Jenks, two of his new apartments in West Acton were rushed to completion between Christmas and New Year's Day and were ready for classes on time. Temporary approval from the state building inspector was secured and another rush project carried out by high school students Dexter Loring and James Kazokas, who, working during the vacation period, readied forty two desks by the January 7th deadline. Most of the desks, assembled from parts salvaged from the attics and basements of all the school buildings, were nicely refinished along with teacher's desks secured as surplus military property from Fort Devens three years ago. Cooperation by officials of the Concord Reformatory allowed the speeding up of delivery on chairs for the new primary school buildings so that the required number were on hand for the displaced second grade.

In the high school the two shift plan seems imminent as of September 1953. Just what changes this will force upon Principal William O'Connell and his corps of fifteen teachers will emerge only when the system is in actual operation. One thing is certain and all wise administrators have seen it coming for several years. The avalanche of the increased baby crop is upon the country and no short term plans are going to suffice.

Concommitant with the agitation relative to the consolidated school project there arose as a natural consequence the whole question of the zoning of the town. At the meeting of March 8, 1937 it was voted to draw up a set of building laws and Robert N. Bowen, Raymond F. Durkee, James Kinsley, Frank Merriam, Webster S. Blanchard, and Howard J. Billings were appointed to prepare a set of laws for the consideration of the town.

Here again, due to the interference of the war, the zoning question did not come before the town for several years. A hearing was held on May 13, 1946 but no action was taken and no mention is made of it in the town reports since it was not a called town meeting. The zoning by-laws as eventually drawn up appear in full in the 1947 town report, pages 64-70. The by-laws appear to be carefully and fairly drawn but, as is not unusual with such a knotty problem, there was much division of opinion. They came before the electorate at the meeting on March 8, 1948 and were defeated by a vote of 275 to 157. Since that time certain events have transpired that have caused some of the opponents to alter their opinion but as of the present the matter still hangs in abeyance.

At the March meeting of 1938 Acton became the owner of its first municipal ball park when it accepted a deed of gift from the trustees of the Elnathan Jones Community Field in South Acton and appropriated three hundred dollars for the upkeep for the current year. Mr. Eden Cahill was hired as caretaker. At that date the supposition was that the field would be used by the town ball club and the high school. Nobody could then envision the present rage of midget teams that has swept the country and made the field an instrument for the entertainment of young and old quite beyond the concept of anyone who first laid it out.

Mention has previously been made of the hurricane of 1815 that wrought its havoc in the vicinity of Nehemiah's Hill. In 1938, however, on the night of the autumnal equinox, devastation on a much larger scale hit the whole eastern portion of the state. Heavy rains that had soaked the ground for three days were followed by hurricane winds late in the afternoon. Thousands of trees were broken down but as many more, their roots having but slight traction in the saturated undersoil, merely eased over and lay prone with the whole root structure intact on the surface. By the time darkness had fully settled every street in town was blocked with debris of all sorts including light poles, diverse portions of roofs and fences and assorted ruins. Due to heroic efforts on the part of the street department, however, and the spirited cooperation of the public, every principal street was open to traffic by the next day. Over nine thousand dollars was spent on the clearing project. Many of the fine old trees on the Common were victims as were also the major portion of the beautiful white pines that used to adorn Woodlawn. When the salvaged lumber was finally sawed and stacked on the open field at the junction of Newtown Rd. and Fort Pond Rd. the piles covered the whole area to a height of ten feet.

Several minor items appear in the record of 1938 which, while not important locally, are of passing interest. By a vote of 575 to 360 the town expressed its approval of biennial state elections. On the same ballot were questions relating to pari-mutuel betting. It appears that Acton favors running the horses but turns thumbs down on dogs.

With a thriving high school and a growing population it was a natural consequence that there should evolve in due course a Parent Teachers Association. On November 6, 1939 the organization was effected with Mrs. Edward Schmitz as president, Mrs. Robert Hall, vice-president, Miss Florence Merriam, secretary, and Mrs. Warren Hartwell, treasurer. The meetings were to be held on the first Monday of each month and the dues were twenty five cents. The original call for the first discussion meeting was signed by Mrs. O. S. Creeley, Mrs. Carl Flint, Mrs. Elwin Hollowell, Mrs. William A. Heuss, Mrs. Fred

Rimbach, and Mr. Walter Hall. An item in the minutes for February 2, 1942 assigns to Mrs. Rimbach the credit for being the founder of the organization. On January 10, 1940 the group voted to join the state association.

After the second and final burning of the Monument House the cellar hole was filled in and the area put into presentable condition. In order that it might so remain Mr. James E. Kinsley, then on the Board of Selectmen, very generously and wisely purchased it and presented it to the town with the restriction that the frontage on Concord Road and Main Street be forever maintained as a part of the town common and that no structure ever be erected thereon other than a marker bearing the inscription,

"This lot of land presented to the town of Acton by
James Edward Kinsley, 1940."

The town accepted the gift on March 11, 1940 and appointed Horace F. Tuttle, Webster S. Blanchard, and Wiliam Merriam as a committee to determine what portion of the land should be subject to the conditions imposed by the donor.

The marker is a simple native boulder about two feet across to which is affixed a bronze plate bearing the inscription cited above.

In late November of 1940, Jesse L. Livermore, the New York stock market plunger who had made and lost several fortunes, committed suicide. Although not a resident of the town he was a frequent visitor since his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Livermore, lived on Nagog Hill Road as nearest neighbors to the Durkees. About 1908 they left the farm and went to a residence that Jesse had prepared for them at College Point, Long Island. The old couple, however, yearned for the soil of Acton and so, within a comparatively brief time a new house was erected for them on Central St. in South Acton. Here, provided with a car, and attended by a chauffer and his wife, they spent their latter years.

In 1941 Acton had the experience of losing by death one of its leading school officials while in active service. Over the years there had been one or two teachers in the elementary schools who had fallen by the wayside but in this case the town was bereft of its superintendent and high school principal simultaneously. On January 20th Mr. Walter Frothingham Hall deceased. He had come to Acton after a very successful career in Canton, Mass. He was a graduate of Harvard and held advanced degrees in Arts and in Education from the same institution. He had in the five years of his sojourn in the town proved himself to be an educator of sensitivity, ability, and dignity, and a loyal and generous citizen.

Mr. Richard Greenman, likewise a Harvard product, who had been in the school system since 1935, was chosen to fill the vacancy.

Nineteen hundred forty two was the first full year after the United States entered the second World War. Many problems arising out of the support of the conflict necessitated the reorganization of certain phases of the local governmental structure. The selectmen in their report for the year speak specifically of the excellent work of the Committee on Public Safety and of the Rationing Board, both of which were innovations. Although not directly due to the war, but obviously desirable under the circumstances, were the purchase of a new police cruiser with two way radio equipment and a new fire truck, which latter, had to wait for a time due to priorities.

Under the stimulus of doing new things through necessity the town acquired the laudable habit of attending to other matters long overdue. As a consequence in 1943 an adequate sum was set forth in the budget for the removal of garbage under the direction of the Board of Health. In 1944 flourescent lighting was installed in all the elementary schoolrooms, a new roof was voted for the high school building, the town voted to have an annual audit of the various accounts, and the Centre and South fire houses were painted and put in order.

In the meantime several things of interest were taking place with respect to the High School. Under the will of Miss Charlotte Conant a fund was set up for the maintenance of a school library in 1944. To those who knew Miss Conant this bequest was characteristicly eloquent of her enduring interest in and loyalty to Acton and served to put a proper final period to the many ways in which she had served the town.

The school report of the era mentions a high school band, orchestra and glee club as functioning with success. In athletics both the boys' and the girls' teams in basketball entered the Waschusett Basketball League and performed with creditable success. In Middlesex County the Acton High School Agriculture Club has the longest record of continuous existence and the local 4-H town committee led in fund raising. Acton was cited as among the top communities for percentage of pupils participating in 4-H work and the town report congratulated the committee chairmen Mrs. Warren E. Hartwell and Mr. Edward Estabrook. In scholastic matters the Acton High School in 1944 was rated class A by the Massachusetts Department of Education and the certifying privilige was extended by the New England College Admissions Board.

On the sombre side of the picture we find in 1943 a page reserved in the school report in memory of Theodore Herman Ahrhardt, former principal of the West School, who was killed in action June 4th of that year in the Latin American area.

Earliest among the students of the high school to make the supreme sacrifice was Robert Lynne Townsend, son of Rev. Lynne Townsend

of the Centre Congregational church, who was graduated in 1941 and died of wounds at Bouganville in November 1943. He was president of his junior class, president of the student council, and member of the football team and of the Torch staff.

In 1944 three former students gave their lives, namely, Robert Webber McAllister who attended the West School, Robert Everett Henry Thatcher, who was graduated from the High School in 1934, and David Lester Jenks, who was graduated in 1939, was president of his senior class and was active in dramatics and athletics. The year 1945 added the names of Francis J. Conroy, class of 1940; Ansel R. Smart, class of 1935, and Robert B. Taylor, class of 1938.

These grim reminders of the ravages of war serve to make clear what has happened to civic attitudes since World War I. These young men were just as brave and gave up just as much and suffered equally with those of the Indian wars or the Revolution. Since the dawn of the twentieth century, however, we as a people have become inured to almost constant conflict on a prodigious scale. We see thousands leave for far places, we see thousands return, and we hear with dulled minds of other thousands killed, without any of the acute sense of personal concern that agonized our forebears of a century ago. We live in a sort of perpetual fatalistic partial coma where we hope for a change for the better but really do not expect it. For this reason the fanfare of returning heroes is no longer attractive. Those that return merely accentuate the absence of those who were buried on foreign soil or lost at sea. A literal deluge of blood and tears for more than a generation has taught us that war is not glorious.

Out of these dismal facts grew in 1945 the War Records Committee, consisting of Ralph Marble, Herbert E. Leucher, Theron A. Lowden, Prentice W. Blood and Mrs. Marjorie J. Davis, whose duty it was to keep an authentic record of all the men and women in service in the war. A year later the committee was renamed the War Record and Veteran's Service Committee and one thousand dollars was voted for the expenses. At that time no one could foresee what the future of this committee would be but as of the present Mr. Lowden's work as director has brought it to a scope where stenographic assistance and Wednesday evening office hours are maintained for the convenience of the service men and women.

In 1945 the time arrived when a new regime became necessary in the administration of the Memorial Library. Mr. Davis, who had filled the office of Librarian for forty three years, was failing in health. For several years he carried on with the aid of assistants but evenutally the trustees felt impelled to the conclusion that the Library would operate more successfully with one person at the head. Consequently they made Mr. Davis Libarian Emeritus and asked Miss

Mary Lothrop, who had been made assistant the year previous, to be Librarian.

The period was somewhat difficult due to the war years and consequent gas rationing. When that situation cleared there was a considerable influx of new people which is continuing to the present. Under the combined impact of all these factors numerous innovations have taken place and more are contemplated for improving the Library service further. For one thing the Trustees are creating a reference library and reading room with money left by the late Murray Brown. The interior has been re-decorated and is much more cheerful and restful. The new lighting units are a vast improvement.

The circulation trebled in the first seven years of this change and is still on the increase. The old friendly chatting has necessarily been abandoned to maintain quiet for students. What appeared to be an enormous building for the town needs in 1889 is now confronted with an acute traffic problem; additional space is a desperate need and plans are under way to provide relief.

The general public reads more than formerly and is more demanding in its taste. Furthermore, membership in the Wachusett Library Group and the American Library Association imposes inescapable standards of modernity. In consequence the Trustees and the Librarian have discarded all the books possible, in particular those having extremely fine print and those that had set on the shelves since the erection of the building without ever having been drawn out. In the process great care was taken not to discard valuable material. Among the outlets was the town of Boxborough, as a result of its fire tragedy, the Emerson Hospital and Camp Devens.

In this attitude the Library officials are on sound ground and wholly up-to-date. Dead head books are the bete-noire of the active working library. There is a movement in certain areas where several colleges are reasonably near together to have a common impounding center for books that are not in demand. Here they can be kept without heat or light and with only casual oversight. They remain in the possession of the respective institutions and are carried on their several inventories but are not occupying space acutely needed for active volumes. If a particular book is desired side car service can deliver it in a matter of hours. Certainly a book that has not been opened in twenty years, or even ten, cannot be so important that the researcher cannot wait a day for it.

Before leaving the year 1945 it will be of interest to some to bring in a bit of unusual comment. Throughout the past generations Acton has celebrated April 19th because its men stood firm in the presence of adversaries. Not until 1945 did it attain national attention because one of its residents ran away from his opponents. At noon of that year

Johnny Kelley was covering the weary miles from Hopkinton to Boston in the annual B. A. A. marathon and coming in the winner.

Ten years previous he had, as a resident of Arlington, likewise carried off the palm of victory. In 1944 he came to West Acton, married an Acton girl, and became an integral part of the community. In 1948 he was on the United States Olympic Marathon Team at London. At that time he called upon the mayor of Acton, England, and a letter to him from the mayor hangs in the Memorial Library. In 1949 he flew to Norway and Sweden to compete in international running events.

Despite Acton's long involvement with things military and historical there was no active movement with regard to the establishment of a chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution until 1947. At that time, under the stimulus of efforts by Mrs. Rolfe Bradbury as founder, there was an installation by the State Regent, Mrs. Warren S. Currier, on November 22, 1947. This action was confirmed by the National Society on December 9th of the same year and the first chapter meeting was held on January 8, 1948.

A list of the first officers and charter members is given herewith.

Founder and Regent, Mrs. Rolfe Bradbury; Vice-Regent, Mrs. George W. Newton; Chaplain, Mrs. Bertha Lowden; Recording Secretary, Mrs. Dewey E. Boatman; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Walter M. Cook; Treasurer, Miss Clara Newton; Registrar, Mrs. Winthrop E. Richmond; Historian Mrs. E. Wilson Bursaw; Librarian, Mrs. Russell C. Berry; Chairman of Junior Committee, Mrs. John Loring; Chairman of Program and Ellis Island Committee, Mrs. Miriam T. Shearman.

Additional charter members; Mrs. Lowell H. Cram; Mrs. Homer D. Keunerson; Mrs. Elliot Livermore; Mrs. William Lears; Mrs. Ethel Milbery; Mrs. Stuart Allen; Miss Natalia Farley; Miss Phyllis Cook; Mrs. Hal Newport; Mrs. William Chipman; Mrs. Walter I. Taylor; Miss Esther Taylor; Mrs. Leo Cunningham; Mrs. Katherine Sanford Salt; Miss Katherine Sanford Salt; Miss Eunice Sewall; Mrs. Gordon Westby; Mrs. Mildred Hodgen.

One of the major projects of the chapter has been the securing and the proper preservation of the Isaac Davis plow used by Daniel Chester French as a model for his statue of the Minute Man at Concord Bridge. The plow, now enclosed in an elegant glass case on the stage of the town hall, was kept in the Davis family for five generations and finally returned to Acton on April 19th, 1951. Contributions by public spirited citizens, organizations, and the school children, made possible its presentation to the town.

Although the centennial of the dedication of the Davis Monument fell on October 29, 1951, it was found advantageous to combine the

observance of the hundred years and the presentation and acceptance of the plow with the anniversary meeting of the Chapter on November 8th.

The program of the evening is given in full below.

Opening of the meeting in the usual D. A. R. manner.

Reading of the Scriptures, the Lord's Prayer, Pledge of Allegiance, The American's Creed and the singing of the Star Spangled Banner.

Welcome to guests.

Presentation and Acceptance of the Davis Plow.

Paul Revere Bell Ringers

"The Story of the Davis Monument on Acton Common"
written by Harold R. Phalen and read by
Selectman Arthur W. Lee.

Paul Revere Bell Ringers.

Closing by the singing of America.

The exercises were followed by light refreshments.

During the decades while Mr. Arthur F. Blanchard was carrying on the extensive family projects and passing the eighty year mark his son Webster grew to manhood, married Hazel Gage of Augusta, Maine, and took a prominent place in the affairs of the organization and of the town. Born in West Acton, he attended Phillips Exeter Academy and was graduated from Harvard in 1917. He was in the Naval Reserve in World War I.

He was vice-president and director of the New England Brick Co. of Boston and the Economic Machinery Co. of Worcester; president and director of the Woodward Lumber Co. of Brattleboro, Vt., a corporator of the Franklin Savings Bank of Boston, and a trustee of the Middlesex Institution for Savings, of Concord, and president and director of the Howe Lumber Co. of Marlboro. He also served unsparingly on the town finance board for many years and on the ration board during the time of its operation.

About 1946 the father, son, and daughter-in-law formed the Blanchard Foundation which, as one of its first projects, donated a beautiful new school building to the town of Boxborough. It was erected on land formerly a part of the old Blanchard farm which for a time belonged to Mr. Simon Hagar. He sold the land to the Boxborough play ground committee in 1919. In a few years this project expired and the land was purchased for its taxes by Boxborough Grange. When Mr. Blanchard approached the town with his proposition relative to a school building the Grange donated the land.

The building was a model of modern school architecture and was designed to accomodate fifty five pupils which at that time was thought to be amply adequate for a considerable period. With improved

school facilities, however, new residents came in apace so that at the end of the second year the top grade had to be sent to Acton.

Immediately the Boxborough project was a going affair the Blanchards, in characteristic fashion, took cognizance of the fact that Acton town hall could no longer meet the needs of a rapidly increasing community. Already loud speakers were being used at town meetings to convey to the overflow in the lower room the progress of events upstairs. Furthermore the high school had no gymnasium. Consequently in 1952 adequate resources were tendered the town for the erection of a combination gymnasium and auditorium and ground was broken for the edifice on July 20, 1953.

As the plans were in the formative stage catastrophe beset the town twice within a brief three months. On February 23, 1953 the younger Mr. Blanchard passed away and was followed by the eighty seven year old father on the following 19th of May. Thereby the town lost two of its loyal sons. Both men had the rare gift of being equally at home in the magnificent business offices of the great industrialists or on a nail keg in a cross roads store. Acton residents, both obscure and prominent, felt keenly the loss of personal friends and neighbors.

The affairs of the high school have been picked up chronologically as they came along. In that connection 1950, quite apart from the big items of consolidation and overcrowding, was of import in another direction. The senior class for the first time made the ever popular and educational tour to Washington and other historical points, thereby putting the school into the travelled and sophisticated category. Apparently the custom is to prevail since the two succeeding groups of seniors have done likewise.

Repeatedly the fact has been mentioned that Acton has ever been the beneficiary of the thoughtfulness and the resources of its loyal natives. Among these are two brothers, Roland and Ernest Wetherbee, born in East Acton, who went at an early age to join their uncle, Frank J. Putney in his enterprises in Putney, Georgia. Some years ago Mr. Roland Wetherbee settled a trust fund for the improvement and care of a certain area of the cemetery and in 1950 Mr. Ernest Wetherbee provided the funds for the beautiful memorial gate dedicated to his wife, Harriet Pickard Wetherbee, born in Littleton and buried in Woodlawn. Her father, Mr. Cyrus Pickard, was for many years a successful farmer in Littleton. In his later years he sold the farm and resided in Acton Centre in the house now owned by Mr. Winthrop Richmond.

By voting YES on article 34 of the town warrant of 1950 Acton decided to "accept the bequest of Betsey Morse Ball, late of Marlborough, Mass. and authorize the selectmen to act in accordance therewith."

Miss Ball taught in the Centre Primary from 1879 to 1888. Her father, Lewis Ball, owned and operated the pencil factory that stood on the homestead now occupied by Mr. Woodbine on Brook St.

The following excerpt from the will of Miss Ball is of interest:

> *. . . pay the principle of the said trust fund to the Inhabitants of the Town of Acton, the income thereof to be used for the assistance of such deserving poor of said Town as in the judgement of the Selectmen thereof may be in need of medical or surgical services and if at any time in the judgement of said selectmen there be no such person in need, the said income to be used for the promotion of the industrial education of such child or children resident in the said town as in the judgement of the Selectmen shall be most deserving, and in such proportions as they may deem fit and if at any time there shall be in the judgement of the Selectmen no person properly entitled to such assistance, then such income to be used for such other educational purposes in and for the benefit of said Town or its children as to the Selectmen may seem proper.*

This fund, now approximating eleven thousand dollars according to the latest town report, is one of some seventeen in the custody of the town treasurer, which total almost two hundred and fifty thousand dollars as tangible evidence of the interest of Acton citizens in its welfare, its beauty, and its hold upon their sentiments.

Within recent years Acton has felt the impact of an entirely new trend in the industrial world. Due in part to prohibitive taxes in the completely urban areas, in part perhaps to the desire for dispersion because of apprehension concerning atomic bombing, but certainly in major measure because of Acton's superior supply of cool water, new plants have come to town.

These are not the architectural horrors that congregated along the railway in previous eras but are located in unsettled areas, in some cases in the forest far away from residences and even from the highway. They are neat, compact, modernistic structures, run by electricity and having none of the offensive attributes of the smoke belchers of the past.

Concommitant with the erection of these plants there has come about the amazing phenomenon, fantastic a generation ago, of commuters from the city coming to Acton to work. This phase will eventually pass with the arrival of adequate housing but it is a present fact that belongs in the town's story.

Early among these newcomers was the Dewey and Almy Chemical Company which, seeking to expand its Cambridge plant and needing a location remote from dwellings where the more hazardous of its

projects could be carried on, found the abandoned two hundred and fifty acre tract of the former smokeless powder mills particularly attractive since it had a sandy gravel soil, abundant water supply, and was on the main line of the Boston and Main Railroad. Here in 1946 they started the manufacture of solvent solutions of rubbers and resins.

As a result of expansion after the war there are now twenty two buildings in which are produced sealing compounds, soldering fluxes, and machinery used in the canning industries; similar compounds for the steel drum and pail manufacturers; insoles, cements, adhesives and synthetic and reconstructed leather for the shoe trade; bags, shipping cases, and adhesives for the paper container market; sealing compounds, soldering fluxes, and storage battery appurtenances for the automotive industry; and various products that are utilized in the rubber, paint, and plastic industries.

The next was the Sir Steak Machinery Company. In 1948 this concern took over the unique cobblestone shop built by Mr. Nelson Tenney just after the turn of the century and after making the changes necessary to adapt it to the requirements of their business began the manufacture of diverse types of meat tenderizing equipment.

Under the direction of Mr. O. Robert Deckert, president and general manager, some forty five persons, including Mr. Benjamin Sawyer, who saw the original building erected and worked for many years for Mr. Tenney, are kept busily engaged. It is the company's objective to engage helpers who plan a long stay in Acton and who wish to become an integral part of the community life.

In 1949 the Air Production Sales Company, manufacturers of acetelyn gas, hydrogen, and oxygen erected its plant a quarter of a mile south of the Laws Brook Road in the unsettled area near the Concord line. This enterprise, like Dewey and Almy, was specifically attracted by the available supply of satisfactory water.

The Technology Instrument Corporation is located just at the eastern edge of the Centre village. The architecture of its building and the landscape gardening have produced a result totally undreamed of by the manufacturers of a bygone day. The business moved from Waltham in January of 1951 and currently employes two hundred and fifty persons. A second wing is being added to the original building as this is being written. As might be suspected from the name of the company the product consists of laboratory instruments, particularly in the electrical field, such as resistance boxes, meters, oscillators, potentiometers and precision instruments of all sorts.

The latest comer is the Rex Corporation which formerly functioned in three different locations in Cambridge and Boston. According to Mr. John A. Crowe, writing for the president, the move to West Acton

was occasioned to a considerable degree by pressure from the Defense Agencies to get away from the congested industrial areas. The need for ample room was also a vital consideration.

Certainly the company found what it desired on Hayward Road. The stretch of wilderness from Arlington Street to Charter Rd. along what was originally Deacon Samuel Hayward's Way to Meeting never had, so far as the author is aware, any edifice built on it since the incorporation of the town until within the last few years.

The Rex Corporation has some forty thousand feet of floor space on a twenty five acre tract. There are three separate laboratories, one for compounding research and engineering, one for general research and one for testing. There is also an engineering department and a machine shop for the design and construction for any special purpose equipment that may be needed.

The business is primarily the extrusion of plastics. particularly where high precision and difficult shapes are involved. The company products go into the construction of storm windows, doors and screens, luggage binding, welting, belting and rodding, marking tape for tennis courts, craftstrip for weaving, braiding and wrapping. From this craftstrip are made tie clips, lanyards, key chains, belts etc.

The company has made thousands of miles of insulated wire for the Signal Corps as well as a variety of special wires for electrical and electronic applications. In addition a third field of activity is cast resin in sheets and rods for use in high frequency electrical installations.

The company at present employs one hundred and sixty five persons, who came with them from Cambridge and Boston but who now are located in Acton, Concord, and Maynard.

The time lag between the town's fire fighting facilities and its needs has been pointed out repeatedly in the foregoing pages. Fortunately we can terminate the story of Acton on a gratifying note by recording the removal of this impasse due to the erection of the new and adequate building at the Centre. The project was initiated in 1949 when a sum of four hundred dollars was voted to cover the expenses of a survey and the drawing of the requisite maps. In 1950 the necessary additional funds were made available for the completion of what has proved to be a pleasing addition to the village not only architectually but from a utilitarion standpoint since the upper portion of the building has furnished temporary housing for the local third grade until such time as the whole school accomodation problem shall have been resolved.

The driving force behind the behavior of a human group must be sought in the internal constitution of the social milieu. The things that have happened to and in Acton have their genesis in the type of

persons who have trod its highways and tilled its acres. The early settlers found a hard country and they adjusted their lives to the goal of survival. From this initial baptism of tribulation emerged the society of our grandsires. Its virtues, its faults, its mistakes, and its victories impinge upon us of today. Whether the torch burn bright or dull it is ours to carry as best we may.

The life story of Acton is brief against the backdrop of the interminable past, less perhaps than the age of some of the great trees that stand within its confines, but within that span have come some of the most dynamic years of history. With all its errors and heartbreak it has been a most challenging three centuries in which to live. It started with the brave new world on the North American continent and it may, conceivably, witness the eclipse of civilization unless man can refute the colossal indictment that he lacks the wit to live with himself on this planet. Whatever the future, the actors will come and go

> "*For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.*" 1 *Chronicles* 29:15.

The tale is told, the story writ,
That some who care may read,
And, if reading, come to understand
The soul of this fair place,
Where men have wrought and wept and played,
Have worshipped, sinned, and bred
Throughout three hundred rolling years,
The scribe may rest content.

APPENDIX I

BETWEEN THE TOWN OF CONCORD AND THOMAS WHEELER, THE MAJOR PORTION OF THE ORIGINAL AGREEMENT EXECUTED JANUARY 12, 1669.

"The said inhabitants of the Town of Concord do for the full term of twenty one years, bearing the date from the twenty fifth of March, one thousand six hundred and sixty eight let and to farm sett to the said Thomas Wheeler or his heirs a certain tract of upland and medo contained within the Inlargement by the Generall Court Aforesaid, the upland by estimation two hundred acres bounded as followeth — That is to say from the n. w. corner of John Shepards land to the north side of the meadow called the Round Medo & so forwards with a straight line to Nashoba Brook; on the other sides bounded by Nashoba Brook & the brook that comes from the house now inhabited by John Law to a small brook that Runes between the said house inhabited by the said Law and the house of the said Shipard; provided the said Law retaine that part of the pasture by him fenced on the East side of the small brooke to the value of half an acre or thereabouts and the medow according to the estimation of three men by the said towne appointed; to value and name the said medow besides the medow upon Nashoba brooke, sixty acres: lying in A severall parcels under the denominations following, Imp. all the medow on both sides upon the brooke from the bridg by the aforesaid house inhabited by the said Law to Nashoba brooke by estimation six acres also the medow called Turne brook Medow with certain small parcels of medow adjacent by estimation twenty acres; also another medow called brookes Medow by estimation eight acres with a spot of medow parted from the said brookes medow by a swamp and running to the aforesaid Shipards line at heathen medow by estimation one acre; also a medow called Flagg medow by estimation - - - teen acres; also a medow called Round medow about half a mile from the aforesaid Shipards house by estimation three acres; also a medow called pine pond medow About an mile Eastward from nagog pond by estimation eight acres; also all the severall spots of medow lying between the said pine pond medow & the cartway going from the aforesaid Shipards house to brookes medow by estimation four acres; and also in consideration of the bull afterwards expressed by the said Thomas or his heirs provided & maintained for the use of the said Towne; all the medow upwards upon Nashoba brooke from the first bounds of the said Towne, to have & to hold to him or to his heirs without let or molestation the said premises for the Terme aforesaid and the said

Inhabitants doe farther Covinant & agree with the said Thomas his heires during the terme aforesaid yearly to furnish him or them with an heard of cattle for them the said Inhabitance to keep or cause to be kept in number not less than Eighty and not exceeding on hundred & twenty with the cattle of the said Thomas or his heires; which said cattle shall be marked by the owners & the marks given to the said Thomas or his heires. In consideration whereof the said Thomas or his heires shall be allowed two shillings per head, which the said Thomas or his heires shall Receive an third part in wheat an third part Rie or peese an third part Indian corne. It is further promised by the said inhabitance that a bull by them shall be promised for the use of the said heard the first and second year the said Thomas or heires do keep the said herd & that the said owners of the cattle shall keep the said herd twelve sabbath days yearely at the appointment & according to the proportion by the said Thomas or his heires allotted."

APPENDIX II

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE CHOSEN BY THE TOWN OF CONCORD TO DETERMINE A LIST OF PROPRIETORS OF THE NEW GRANT OTHERWISE KNOWN AS CONCORD VILLAGE

"At meeting March 7, 1697/98 a comm. appt. Cor. Fletcher, John Jones, Jno. Hubbard, Lt. Prescote, Sargt. Wood, Nath'l Jones, Lt. Davis, Wm. Wilson & Thomas Brown to search out who are ye true proprietors of ye Towns New Grant of Lands met on Mar. 14 and decided as follows:

John Barker Jr. upon acct John Shepard Sr one; John Law one unto ye liveings of Edward Wright sr deceased 2 shares, Roger Chandler 1, John Heald 1 unto ye liveing of Richard Temple sr deceast 1 unto Jas Davis 1, Lt Simon Davis the liveing of Baptiz Smedly 1, Thomas Bateman 1, Mr. Adam Winthrop, ye living yt was Wm Hunts deceased 1, Thomas Brown sr 1, Sam'l Butterick for Heald's living 1, Wm Butterick 1, The heirs of Mr. John Flynt 1, Nehemiah Hunt sr 1, Robt Blood 1, Wm Wilson 2, John Smedly 1, Sam'l Jones sr 1, Decn Humphry Barrott 1, Capt. James Minott for the living that he now lives onl, unto ye yt was Thomas Dane deceased in ye lands of Lt prescote 1, the cottage of Robt Draper deceased 1, John Jones ,Decn Potter 1, Sargn't Thomas Wheeler for ye liveing yt Harwood lives upon 1, that he lives upon & that which his son Joshua lives on two Wm. Barker lives on 1, Nath'll Stow deceast 1, Mr. Francis Fletcher two, Hoar 1, Eliphelet Fox one, Nath'l Ball ser. one, To ye living of Wm Hartwell 1, Joseph Wooley for James Taylor's living 1, Christopher Wooley 1, ye living yt Jacob Taylor lives upon 1, John Mirriam sr 1, Capt James minot upon ye acct of ye living yt Rigbe lives upon 1, Gershome Brooks living 1, ye living Caleb Brooks 1, The living that was Joshua Brooks 1, Richard Rice 1, Capt Ephraim Flynt 2, Thomas Goble deceased his living 1, Mr. Dan'l 1, John Billing 1, Sam'l Stratton , Estabrook 1, Mr. Joseph Estabrookes 1, The living that was Wm Woods deceased 1, Sam'l Mirriam 1, Mr. Joseph Bulkeley 1, John Wheeler senr. 1, Johnathan for ye living yt was Deconn Mirriam deceast 1, Joshua Wheeler one, Sam'l wh for his grandfather's living 1, James Smedly 1, Nath'l Jones for Lt living 1, John Hayward sr 1, Lt Prescote upon ye accompt of Mr. Edward Bulkley sr deceased his living 1, Edward Wheeler , John Miles his living 1, The living of Thomas Stow deceast 1, Decn Jno Heywood on account of purchasing ye olf living yt was Edmon Wigley deceast 1, the living yt was Woodises 1, Thomas Dakin 1, Michael Wood deceased his living 1, Obediah Wheeler sr 1, William Wheeler 1, Thomas

Hosmer 1, John Hayward at ye mill 1, Simon Hay - - his old living at ye Town 1, The Iron Works 1, Dan'll pellitt , Thomas Browne Jun 1, Francis Dudley 1, John Hartwell sr 1, Goble deceased his living 1, John Barker sr 1, John Bloods deceased"

APPENDIX III

LIST OF SELECTMEN, TOWN CLERKS, AND TOWN TREASURERS FOR THE TOWN OF ACTON FROM 1735 TO 1950

Year	Selectmen			Clerk	Treasurer
1735	John Heald	Joseph Fletcher	Thomas Wheeler	Thomas Wheeler	John Barker
1736	Joseph Fletcher	John Brooks	Thomas Wheeler	Thomas Wheeler	John Barker
1737	Simon Hunt	John Brooks	Jonathan Parlin	Simon Hunt	John Barker
1738	Simon Hunt	Joseph Fletcher	John Heald	Simon Hunt	John Brooks
1739	Simon Hunt	Gershom Davis	Ammiruhamma Faulkner	Simon Hunt	Jonathan Billing
1740	Simon Hunt	Gershom Davis	Ammiruhamma Faulkner	Simon Hunt	Jonathan Billing
1741	Simon Hunt	John Brooks	Andrew Derby	Simon Hunt	Jonathan Billing
1742	Simon Hunt	John Brooks	Andrew Derby	Simon Hunt	Jonathan Billing
1743	Simon Hunt	Andrew Derby	Jonathan Hosmer	Simon Hunt	Jonathan Billing
1744	Jonathan Hosmer	John Brooks	Andrew Derby	Jonathan Hosmer	Jonathan Billing
1745	Jonathan Hosmer	John Brooks	Samuel Davis	Jonathan Hosmer	Jonathan Billing
1746	Jonathan Hosmer	Samuel Davis	John Davis, Jr.	Jonathan Hosmer	Jonathan Billing
1747	Jonathan Hosmer	Samuel Davis	Phinehas Osgood	Jonathan Hosmer	Jonathan Billing
1748	Jonathan Hosmer	Samuel Davis	Phinehas Osgood	Jonathan Hosmer	Jonathan Billing
1749	Jonathan Hosmer	Samuel Davis	Josiah Hayward	Jonathan Hosmer	Jonathan Billing
1750	Jonathan Hosmer	Daniel Fletcher	Lt. Jonathan Billing	Jonathan Hosmer	Jonathan Billing
1751	Jonathan Hosmer	Daniel Fletcher	Phinehas Osgood	Jonathan Hosmer	Jonathan Billing
1752	Jonathan Hosmer	Daniel Fletcher	John Heald	Jonathan Hosmer	Jonathan Billing
1753	Jonathan Hosmer	Daniel Fletcher	John Heald	Jonathan Hosmer	Jonathan Billing

Year	Selectmen			Clerk	Treasurer
1754	Jonathan Hosmer	Daniel Fletcher	Samuel Davis	Jonathan Hosmer	Jonathan Billing
1755	Jonathan Hosmer	Daniel Fletcher	Samuel Davis	Jonathan Hosmer	Jonathan Billing
1756	John Davis, Jr.	Samuel Jones	Samuel Hayward	John Davis, Jr.	Jonathan Billing
1757	John Davis, Jr.	Samuel Jones	Samuel Hayward	John Davis, Jr.	Jonathan Billing
1758	Jonathan Hosmer	Jonathan Billing	Joseph Wooley	Jonathan Hosmer	Jonathan Billing
1759	Jonathan Hosmer	Jonathan Billing	Samuel Hayward	Jonathan Hosmer	Jonathan Billing
1760	Jonathan Hosmer	John Heald, Jr.	Francis Faulkner	Jonathan Hosmer	Jonathan Billing
1761	Jonathan Hosmer	John Heald, Jr.	Francis Faulkner	Jonathan Hosmer	Jonathan Billing
1762	Francis Faulkner	John Heald, Jr.	Ephraim Hosmer	Francis Faulkner	Jonathan Billing
1763	Francis Faulkner	John Heald, Jr.	Ephraim Hosmer	Francis Faulkner	Jonathan Billing
1764	Francis Faulkner	John Heald, Jr.	Ephraim Hosmer	Francis Faulkner	Jonathan Billing
1765	Francis Faulkner	John Heald, Jr.	Ephraim Hosmer	Francis Faulkner	Jonathan Billing
1766	Francis Faulkner	John Heald, Jr.	Ephraim Hosmer	Francis Faulkner	Jonathan Billing
1767	Francis Faulkner	John Heald, Jr.	Ephraim Hosmer	Francis Faulkner	Jonathan Billing
1768	Francis Faulkner	Nathaniel Edwards	Ephraim Hapgood	Francis Faulkner	Jonathan Billing
1769	Francis Faulkner	Nathaniel Edwards	Ephraim Hapgood	Francis Faulkner	Jonathan Billing
1770	Francis Faulkner	Nathaniel Edwards	Ephraim Hapgood	Francis Faulkner	Jonathan Billing
1771	Francis Faulkner	Simon Tuttle	Ephraim Hapgood	Francis Faulkner	Jonathan Billing
1772	Francis Faulkner	Simon Tuttle	Ephraim Hapgood	Francis Faulkner	Jonathan Billing
1773	Francis Faulkner	John Heald, Jr.	Ephraim Hapgood	Francis Faulkner	Jonathan Billing
1774	Francis Faulkner	John Heywood	Ephraim Hapgood	Francis Faulkner	Jonathan Billing
1775	Francis Faulkner	John Heywood	Ephraim Hapgood	Francis Faulkner	Jonathan Billing
1776	Francis Faulkner	John Heywood	Ephraim Hapgood	Francis Faulkner	Jonathan Billing
1777	Francis Faulkner	Joseph Brabrook	Ephraim Hapgood	Francis Faulkner	Jonathan Billing
1778	Francis Faulkner	Joseph Brabrook	Ephraim Hapgood	Francis Faulkner	Simon Tuttle

Year	Selectmen			Clerk	Treasurer
1779	Francis Faulkner	Jonas Brooks	Samuel Piper	Francis Faulkner	Simon Tuttle
1780	Francis Faulkner	Jonas Brooks	Joseph Brabrook	Francis Faulkner	Simon Tuttle
	Lt. John Heald	Samuel Parlin			

Note: The record of 1780 indicates that five men were chosen selectmen but no mention has been found where any vote was passed to raise the number to five nor to return to three as was done in 1781.

1781	Francis Faulkner	Jonas Brooks	Joseph Brabrook	Francis Faulkner	Simon Tuttle
1782	Francis Faulkner	Jonas Brooks	Joseph Brabrook	Francis Faulkner	Simon Tuttle
1783	Francis Faulkner	Jonas Brooks	Joseph Brabrook	Francis Faulkner	Simon Tuttle
1784	Francis Faulkner	Jonas Brooks	Joseph Brabrook	Francis Faulkner	Simon Tuttle
1785	Francis Faulkner	Jonas Brooks	Joseph Robbins	Francis Faulkner	Aaron Jones
1786	Francis Faulkner	Jonas Brooks	Joseph Robbins	Francis Faulkner	Aaron Jones
1787	Francis Faulkner	Thomas Noyes	Simeon Hayward	Francis Faulkner	Benjamin Brabrook
1788	Francis Faulkner	Thomas Noyes	Simeon Hayward	Francis Faulkner	Benjamin Brabrook
1789	Francis Faulkner	Thomas Noyes	Simeon Hayward	Francis Faulkner	Benjamin Brabrook
1790	Francis Faulkner	Jonas Heald	Aaron Jones	Francis Faulkner	Benjamin Brabrook
1791	Francis Faulkner	Jonas Heald	Aaron Jones	Francis Faulkner	Benjamin Brabrook
1792	Francis Faulkner	Thomas Noyes	Jonas Brooks	Francis Faulkner	Benjamin Brabrook
1793	Francis Faulkner	Thomas Noyes	Jonas Brooks	Francis Faulkner	John Robbins
1794	Francis Faulkner	John Edwards	Jonas Brooks	Francis Faulkner	John Robbins
1795	Francis Faulkner	John Edwards	Jonas Brooks	Francis Faulkner	John Robbins
1796	Francis Faulkner	John Edwards	Jonas Brooks	Francis Faulkner	John Robbins
1797	Aaron Jones	John Edwards	Jonas Brooks	Aaron Jones	John Robbins
1798	Jonas Heald	John Edwards	Jonas Brooks	John Edwards	John Robbins
1799	Jonas Brooks	John Edwards	Jonas Heald	John Edwards	John Robbins
1800	David Barnard	Stevens Hayward	Daniel White	David Barnard	John Robbins
1801	David Barnard	Stevens Hayward	Daniel White	David Barnard	John Robbins
1802	David Barnard	Stevens Hayward	Daniel White	David Barnard	John Robbins

Year	Selectmen			Clerk	Treasurer
1803	David Barnard	Stevens Hayward	Josiah Noyes	David Barnard	John Robbins
1804	David Barnard	Stevens Hayward	Josiah Noyes	David Barnard	John Robbins
1805	David Barnard	Stevens Hayward	Josiah Noyes	David Barnard	John Robbins
1806	David Barnard	Winthrop Faulkner	Josiah Noyes	David Barnard	John Robbins

Note: At the election of 1806 Stevens Hayward was elected but refused to serve and Winthrop Faulkner was chosen in his place.

1807	David Barnard	Joseph Noyes	Amos Noyes	John Robbins	John Robbins
1808	John Robbins	Joseph Noyes	Amos Noyes	John Robbins	David Barnard
1809	John Robbins	Joseph Noyes	Amos Noyes	John Robbins	Dr. Samuel Young
1810	John Robbins	Joseph Noyes	Amos Noyes	John Robbins	Dr. Samuel Young
1811	John Robbins	Joseph Noyes	Amos Noyes	David Barnard	Winthrop Faulkner
1812	John Robbins	Joseph Noyes	Amos Noyes	John Robbins	Winthrop Faulkner
1813	John Robbins	Joseph Noyes	Amos Noyes	John Robbins	Winthrop Faulkner
1814	John Robbins	Joseph Noyes	Amos Noyes	John Robbins	Reuben Wheeler
1815	John Robbins	Joseph Noyes	Amos Noyes	John Robbins	Reuben Wheeler
1816	John Robbins	Joseph Noyes	Aaron Hayward	John Robbins	Reuben Wheeler
1817	John Robbins	Joseph Noyes	Aaron Hayward	John Robbins	Reuben Wheeler
1818	Edward Wetherbee	Joseph Noyes	Aaron Hayward	Joseph Noyes	John Robbins
1819	John Robbins	Abraham Conant	Francis Tuttle	John Robbins	Reuben Wheeler
1820	John Robbins	Abraham Conant	Francis Tuttle	John Robbins	Benjamin Wild
1821	Joseph Noyes	Abraham Conant	Francis Tuttle	Joseph Noyes	Benjamin Wild
1822	Joseph Noyes	Francis Tuttle	Abraham Conant	Silas Jones	Joseph Noyes	Abraham Conant	Francis Tuttle

Note: Joseph Noyes, elected selectman and town clerk at the March meeting died the following July. At a special town meeting Silas Jones was chosen selectman and Abraham Conant became clerk.

1823	Francis Tuttle	Edward Wetherbee	Ebenezer Smith	Francis Tuttle	Abraham Conant
1824	Francis Tuttle	Edward Wetherbee	Abraham Conant	Francis Tuttle	James Hapgood
1825	Francis Tuttle	Edward Wetherbee	Benjamin Wild	Francis Tuttle	James Hapgood

Year	Selectmen			Clerk	Treasurer
1826	Francis Tuttle	Silas Jones	Benjamin Wild	Francis Tuttle	David Barnard
1827	Francis Tuttle	Silas Jones	Robert Chaffin	Francis Tuttle	Abraham Handley
1828	Francis Tuttle	Silas Jones	Robert Chaffin	Silas Jones	Abraham Handley
1829	Francis Tuttle	Stevens Hayward	Simon Hosmer	Stevens Hayward	Abraham Handley
1830	Francis Tuttle	Silas Jones	James Hapgood	Francis Tuttle	Abraham Handley
1831	Francis Tuttle	Silas Jones	James Hapgood	Francis Tuttle	Abraham Handley
1832	Winthrop E. Faulkner	Silas Jones	James Hapgood	Silas Jones	Francis Tuttle
1833	Francis Tuttle	Silas Jones	Winthrop E. Faulkner	Silas Jones	Francis Tuttle
1834	Francis Tuttle	John White	Joseph W. Tuttle	Francis Tuttle	Silas Jones
1835	Francis Tuttle	John White	Joseph W. Tuttle	Francis Tuttle	Silas Jones
1836	Nathan Brooks	Simon Hosmer, Jr.	Joseph W. Tuttle	Joseph W. Tuttle	Silas Jones
1837	Nathan Brooks	Simon Hosmer, Jr.	Joseph W. Tuttle	Joseph W. Tuttle	Peter Tenney
1838	Nathan Brooks	Simon Hosmer, Jr.	Joseph W. Tuttle	Joseph W. Tuttle	Peter Tenney
1839	Nathan Brooks	Francis Tuttle	Daniel Wetherbee	Daniel Wetherbee	Ebenezer Davis
1840	Francis Tuttle	Simon Hosmer, Jr.	Daniel Wetherbee	Daniel Wetherbee	Abraham Handley
1841	Alden Fuller	Ivery Keyes	Daniel Wetherbee	Daniel Wetherbee	Abraham Handley
1842	Alden Fuller	Ivery Keyes	Daniel Wetherbee	Daniel Wetherbee	Fredrick Rouillard
1843	Phinehas Harrington	Ivery Keyes	Daniel Wetherbee	Daniel Wetherbee	Isaac Flagg
1844	Ebenezer Davis	Eliab Grimes	Daniel Wetherbee	Daniel Wetherbee	Luther White
1845	Ebenezer Davis	Eliab Girmes	Daniel Wetherbee	Daniel Wetherbee	Henry Holden
1846	Ebenezer Davis	Phinehas Harrington	Daniel Wetherbee	Daniel Wetherbee	Henry Holden
1847	Ebenezer Davis	Phinehas Harrington	Daniel Wetherbee	Daniel Wetherbee	Henry Holden
1848	Nathaniel Hapgood	Winthrop Conant	Rufus Holden	Daniel Wetherbee	Peter Tenney
	Note: Here ends the custom of having the town clerk chosen from among the selectmen.				
1849	Nathaniel Hapgood	Winthrop Conant	Rufus Holden	Daniel Wetherbee	Samuel Farwell
1850	Ivery Keyes	Luther Conant	James Tuttle	Daniel Wetherbee	John Tenney
1851	Ivery Keyes	Luther Conant	James Tuttle	Daniel Wetherbee	John Tenney

Year	Selectmen			Clerk	Treasurer
1852	Ivery Keyes	James Billings	Moses Hayward	Daniel Wetherbee	John Tenney
1853	Ivery Keyes	James Billings	Moses Hayward	Daniel Wetherbee	William Tuttle
1854	Ivery Keyes	James Billings	William Tuttle	Daniel Wetherbee	Luther Forbush
1855	Elbridge Parker	James Billings	Samuel Jones	William Tuttle	Luther Forbush
1856	Henry Holden	James Billings	Joseph Noyes	William Tuttle	Luther Forbush
1857	Henry Holden	Frederic Rouillard	Samuel Jones	William Tuttle	Luther Forbush
1858	Daniel Wetherbee	Frederic Rouillard	Samuel Jones	William Tuttle	Luther Forbush
1859	Daniel Wetherbee	Frederic Rouillard	Samuel Jones	William Tuttle	Winthrop Conant
1860	Nathaniel Hapgood	Zoheth Taylor	Alden Fuller	William Tuttle	Winthrop Conant
1861	Jonas Putney	Zoheth Taylor	Alden Fuller	William Tuttle	Winthrop Conant
1862	Jonas Putney	James Billings	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee	William Tuttle	John Cutter
1863	Jonas Putney	James Billings	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee	William Tuttle	John Cutter
1864	Jonas Putney	James Billings	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee	William Tuttle	John Cutter
1865	Jonas Putney	James Billings	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee	William Tuttle	John Cutter
1866	Jonas Putney	James Billings	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee	William Tuttle	Francis Dwight
1867	Jonas Putney	James Billings	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee	William Tuttle	John Cutter
1868	Jonas Putney	James Billings	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee	William Tuttle	John Cutter
1869	William W. Davis	Elbridge Robbins	Charles Robinson	William Tuttle	John Cutter
1870	William W. Davis	Elbridge Robbins	Charles Robinson	William Tuttle	John Cutter
1871	Luther Conant	Elbridge Robbins	Joseph Noyes	William Tuttle	John Cutter
1872	James Billings	Hiram Hapgood	Joseph Noyes	William Tuttle	John Cutter
1873	James Billings	Hiram Hapgood	Enoch Hall	William Tuttle	John Cutter
1874	James Billings	Hiram Hapgood	Frank Whitcomb	William Tuttle	John Cutter
1875	James Billings	Hiram Hapgood	Frank Whitcomb	William Tuttle	John Cutter
1876	James Billings	Hiram Hapgood	Frank Whitcomb	William Tuttle	John Cutter
1877	Daniel Wetherbee	John White	Charles Stone	William Tuttle	Francis Dwight
1878	Daniel Wetherbee	John White	Charles Stone	William Tuttle	Francis Dwight
1879	Daniel Wetherbee	John White	Charles Stone	William Tuttle	Francis Dwight

Year	Selectmen			Clerk	Treasurer
1880	Daniel Wetherbee	John White	Phineas Wetherbee	William Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1881	Daniel Wetherbee	John White	Phineas Wetherbee	William Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1882	Daniel Wetherbee	John White	Phineas Wetherbee	William Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1883	Daniel Wetherbee	John White	Phineas Wetherbee	William Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1884	Daniel Wetherbee	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee	Job Dupee	William Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1885	Daniel Wetherbee	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee	Job Dupee	William Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1886	Thomas Noyes	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee	Job Dupee	William Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1887	Thomas Noyes	Jona K. W. Wetherbee	Job Dupee	William Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1888	Thomas Noyes	Howard White	Job Dupee	William Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1889	Thomas Noyes	Howard White	Job Dupee	William Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1890	William Stevens	Howard White	George Keyes	William Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1891	William Stevens	Howard White	George Keyes	William Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1892	William Stevens	Gustavus Bowen	George Keyes	William Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1893	Hanson Littlefield	E. Faulkner Conant	Gustavus Bowen	William Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee

Note: In 1893 the town discontinued the practice of electing each selectman for a single year. Hanson Littlefield was chosen for three years, E. F. Conant for two years and Gustavus Bowen for one year. Occasionally the full term was not completed.

1894	Isaiah Hutchins	E. Faulkner Conant	Daniel Wetherbee	William Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1895	Isaiah Hutchins	E. Faulkner Conant	Daniel Wetherbee	William Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1896	Isaiah Hutchins	E. Faulkner Conant	Daniel Wetherbee	Horace Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1897	William Stevens	E. Faulkner Conant	David Harris	Horace Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1898	William Stevens	E. Faulkner Conant	David Harris	Horace Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1899	William Stevens	E. Faulkner Conant	David Harris	Horace Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1900	William Stevens	E. Faulkner Conant	David Harris	Horace Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1901	William Stevens	E. Faulkner Conant	Edwin Phalen	Horace Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1902	William Stevens	E. Faulkner Conant	Edwin Phalen	Horace Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1903	Hanson Littlefield	Frank Hoit	Edwin Phalen	Horace Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee

Year	Selectmen			Clerk	Treasurer
1904	Arthur Whitcomb	Frank Hoit	Edwin Phalen	Horace Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1905	Arthur Whitcomb	Frank Hoit	Lyman Taylor	Horace Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1906	Bertram Hall	Frank Hoit	Edwin Phalen	Horace Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1907	Bertram Hall	Frank Hoit	James B. Tuttle	Horace Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1908	Bertram Hall	Asaph Merriam	James B. Tuttle	Horace Tuttle	Jona K. W. Wetherbee
1909	William Stevens	Asaph Merriam	James B. Tuttle	Horace Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1910	Charles Stone	Asaph Merriam	James B. Tuttle	Horace Tuttle	Jona. K. W. Wetherbee
1911	Edgar Hall	James Brown	Willis Holden	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit
1912	Edgar Hall	James Brown	Willis Holden	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit
1913	Fred Whitcomb	James Brown	Edward Stanley	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit
1914	Charles Holton	Nicholas Samuel	Edward Stanley	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit
1915	Charles Holton	Nicholas Samuel	Edward Stanley	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit
1916	Charles Holton	Warren Jones	William Kingsley	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit
1917	Charles Holton	Warren Jones	William Kingsley	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit
1918	Charles Holton	Warren Jones	William Kingsley	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit
1919	Charles Holton	Warren Jones	William Kingsley	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit
1920	Charles Holton	Warren Jones	William Kingsley	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit
1921	Alfred Davis	Warren Jones	William Kingsley	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit
1922	Alfred Davis	Warren Jones	Murray Brown	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit
1923	Alfred Davis	Harry Morse	Murray Brown	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit
1924	Albert Jenks	Harry Morse	Murray Brown	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit
1925	Albert Jenks	Harry Morse	Murray Brown	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit
1926	Albert Jenks	Howard Billings	Murray Brown	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit
1927	Waldo Whitcomb	Howard Billings	Murray Brown	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit
1928	Waldo Whitcomb	Howard Billings	Wendell Davis	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit
1929	Waldo Whitcomb	Howard Billings	Wendell Davis	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit
1930	Waldo Whitcomb	Howard Billings	Wendell Davis	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit
1931	Waldo Whitcomb	Howard Billings	Wendell Davis	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit

Year	Selectmen			Clerk	Treasurer
1932	Waldo Whitcomb	Howard Billings	Wendell Davis	Horace Tuttle	Frank Hoit
	Note: Frank Hoit deceased in office Feb. 6, 1933				
1933	Waldo Whitcomb	Howard Billings	Wendell Davis	Horace Tuttle	W. Henry Soar
1934	Waldo Whitcomb	Howard Billings	George Braman	Horace Tuttle	W. Henry Soar
1935	Waldo Whitcomb	Ralph Piper	George Braman	Horace Tuttle	W. Henry Soar
1936	James Kinsley	Ralph Piper	George Braman	Horace Tuttle	W. Henry Soar
1937	James Kinsley	Ralph Piper	Raymond Durkee	Horace Tuttle	W. Henry Soar
1938	James Kinsley	Ralph Piper	Raymond Durkee	Horace Tuttle	W. Henry Soar
1939	James Kinsley	Ralph Piper	Raymond Durkee	Horace Tuttle	W. Henry Soar
1940	James Kinsley	Ralph Piper	W. B. Harvey	Horace Tuttle	W. Henry Soar
1941	James Kinsley	George Morse	W. B. Harvey	Harlan Tuttle	W. Henry Soar
1942	Arthur Lee	George Morse	W. B. Harvey	Harlan Tuttle	W. Henry Soar
1943	Arthur Lee	George Morse	George Braman	Harlan Tuttle	W. Henry Soar
1944	Arthur Lee	Lawrence Donnelly	George Braman	Harlan Tuttle	W. Henry Soar
1945	Arthur Lee	Lawrence Donnelly	George Braman	Harlan Tuttle	W. Henry Soar
1946	Arthur Lee	Lawrence Donnelly	George Braman	Harlan Tuttle	W. Henry Soar
1947	Arthur Lee	Lawrence Donnelly	George Braman	Harlan Tuttle	W. Henry Soar
1948	Arthur Lee	Lawrence Donnelly	George Braman	Harlan Tuttle	W. Henry Soar
1949	Arthur Lee	Lawrence Donnelly	George Braman	Harlan Tuttle	W. Henry Soar
1950	Arthur Lee	Lawrence Donnelly	George Braman	Harlan Tuttle	W. Henry Soar

APPENDIX IV

MINISTER RATES FOR 1761

	£ S P		£ S P
Dea, John Heald	0:13:02	Joseph Farr	0:15:05
John Heald, Jr.	0:15:08	John Bigelow	0:14:03
Isreal Heald	0:11:02	Ezekiel Davis	0:19:08
John Davis	0:10:05	Widow Sarah Wheeler	0:13:10
Micah Davis	0:19:10	David Brooks	0:14:09
Samuel Davis	0:06:08	Timothy Brooks	0:13:05
Samuel Wheeler	0:10:04	Nathaniel Wheeler	0:19:08
Judah Wheeler	0:04:03	Robert Robbins	0:06:08
Jonathan Parlin	0:08:09	Simon Tuttle	0:13:05
Nathan Parlin	0:03:10	Daniel Brooks	0:13:02
David Procter	0:10:07	Cheney Tenny	0:04:11
John Emery	0:19:02	Janos Allen	0:08:01
Nehemiah Wheeler	0:08:07	John Chaffin	0:13:08
Oliver Wheeler	0:08:03	Francis Chaffin	0:06:03
Sampson Wheeler	0:10:00	Robert Chaffin	0:07:10
Samuel Ober	0:08:05	Thos. Blanchard	0:08:03
Joseph Temple	0:05:07	Jona. Sprague	0:03:10
Samuel Davies	0:16:16	Wid. Sarah Temple	0:00:07
Gershom Davies	0:18:09	Benjamin Cragin	0:04:10
Amos Parlin	0:17:03	Zecheriah Emery	0:00:07
David Lamson	0:11:05	John Kelven	0:02:05
John Lamson	0:03:10	John Parlin	0:03:00
Joseph Chamberlain	0:03:09	Jona. Barrit	0:01:10
Gideon Powers	0:06:10	David Parlin	0:01:10
Amos Russell	0:09:01	Benjamin Temple	0:00:07
Davis Keyes	0:04:11	Simon Hunt	0:16:00
Nathaniel Edwards	0:14:11	Nathan Robbins	1:01:05
John Heywood	0:11:02	Phillip Robbins	0:04:10
Samuel White	0:13:07	Nathan Wheeler	0:04:07
Widow Conant	0:04:02	Ephraim Hunt	0:12:07
John Wheeler	0:10:07	William Cutting	1:02:00
Daniel Lock	0:17:04	Jonathan Hosmer	0:18:05
Charles Brown	0:08:08	Jonathan Hosmer, Jr.	0:04:08
Joseph Brabrook	0:04:11	Stephen Hosmer	0:03:10
Widow Lamson	0:02:09	Ephraim Hosmer	0:13:02
Amos Lamson	0:05:05	Amos Prescott	0:19:05
Lt. Billings	1:07:02	Enos Wheeler	0:04:04
Jona. Billings, Jr.	0:03:10	John Law	0:05:07

	£ S P		£ S P
Joseph Wooley	0:16:04	Stephen Law	0:13:02
John Barker, Jr.	0:10:06	Titus Law	0:14:07
Simon Davis	0:10:00	Ephraim Wheeler	0:11:03
Joseph Harris	0:04:09	George Wheeler	0:03:10
Samuel Harris	0:04:03	Daniel Shepherd	0:08:09
Joseph Cleaveland	0:08:11	Joseph Barker	0:19:09
Eleazer Sartwell	0:07:00	Francis Barker	0:15:05
Josiah Hayward, Jr.	0:04:03	John Cragin	0:04:03
John Adams	0:12:02	John Cragin, Jr.	0:09:03
Francis Faulkner	0:14:00	Micah Robbins	0:11:10
Ammi Faulkner	0:13:02	Joseph Robbins	0:11:03
Nathaniel Faulkner	0:09:07	William Barker	0:08:10
Samuel Jones	1:06:03	John Davis, Jr.	0:18:06
Samuel Jones, Jr.	0:07:05	Josiah Piper	0:19:09
James Faulkner	0:13:10	Samuel Hayward	1:14:01
Oliver Jones	0:04:04	Cornet Heldreth	0:01:07
David Forbush	0:16:07	Thomas Barrit	0:01:03
Ens. Hapgood	0:14:10	Samuel Wheeler, Jr.	0:11:00
Jonathan Patch	0:04:04	Robert Conant	0:01:05
Ezra Wheeler	0:03:10	Andrew Conant	0:03:01
William Jewell	0:01:05	Daniel Brooks, Jr.	0:04:03
Daniel Fletcher	1:06:05	John Marble, Jr.	0:01:05
Roger Wheeler	0:05:06	Stephen Farr	0:03:00
Samuel Wright	0:13:06	Stephen Farr, Jr.	0:06:09
Timothy Fletcher	0:08:05	Joseph Wright	0:03:02
Simeon Procter	0:01:03	David Forbush, Jr.	0:09:03
John Hayward	0:03:10	Dea. John Brooks	1:05:04
Nathan Cutting	0:03:10	Jonathan Hosmer	0:06:07
Josiah Hayward	1:13:08	Widow Ruth Wheeler	0:00:05

Jonathan Hosmer
John Heald, Jr. Assessors

APPENDIX V

DIVERSE DATA RELATIVE TO EARLY SCHOOL TEACHING

March 3, 1740 — The question of inaugurating a school system first came before the town and was voted down.

May 2, 1741 — The town voted to have a "reading, riteing and moving school" but provided no funds. Three weeks later an article relative to schools was dismissed.

March 1, 1742 — Town voted "nay" on the question of inaugurating a school system.

December 9, 1743 — Voted to have a school and to raise eighteen pounds for support of the same. Also voted that Samuel Davis, John Craigin and Samuel Jones be a committee to divide the town into three school districts.

May 25, 1744 — Voted twenty pounds for schools to be allocated among the parts of the town by the selectmen.

March 3, 1746 — Voted twenty five pounds for schools to begin on October first. Up to this time no record was kept of who taught the school but we know that during the years 1746 and 1747 Deacon John Heald was the teacher since on March 6, 1749 he was paid five pounds for service during these specific years.

March 7, 1748— Record of selectmen as having paid Phineas Osgood and Josiah Hayward ten pounds each for teaching school.

February 22, 1749 — Town paid Jonathan Hosmer seventeen pounds for teaching school.

March 6, 1749 — In addition to paying John Heald his arrears as heretofore mentioned there was also paid out two pounds to Josiah Hayward, eight pounds to William Farr and eight pounds ten shillings to Timothy Brooks.

March 4, 1751 — Paid John Craigin 2-4-6- for teaching in Mr. Daniel Fletcher's part of town. Also paid John Meriam 2-4-6- for teaching at Strawberry Hill; paid Josiah Hayward 2-4-6; also paid William Farr 3-6-9 for teaching in west part of town.

May 7, 1751 — Paid Ephraim Smith 1-6-8 for teaching in north east part of town.

November 28, 1751 — Paid John Craigin two pounds.

March 2, 1752 — Paid Francis Eveleth two pounds for teaching in

south part of town; also paid John Craigin two pounds for teaching school in middle of town.

March 20, 1752 — Paid John Craigin 1-6-8 for teaching in south east part of town.

March 27, 1752 — Paid William Farr 3-2-3 for teaching.

April 7, 1752 -- Paid Josiah Hayward two pounds for teaching.

May 12, 1753 — Paid Francis Eveleth four pounds for teaching

April, 1754 John Craigin, Francis Eveleth and Jonathan Hosmer listed as receiving pay for teaching.

May 22, 1758 — Same three again mentioned.

March 2, 1760 — Jonathan Hosmer paid for teaching.

December 24, 1760 — paid a Mr. Gibbons 1-6-18.

February 14, 1761 — Paid Ezra Wheeler two pounds and John Craigin and Francis Eveleth unstated amounts.

February 7, 1763 — Nathan Parlin paid for teaching.

January 23, 1764 — John Craigin paid for teaching.

February 6, 1765 — Paid Deacon Hosmer two pounds. Also paid Simon Hunt and John Craigin.

February 6, 1766 — Paid Simon Hunt and Deacon Hosmer for teaching.

January 25, 1773 — Unstated sums paid to Lt. Billing, Francis Faulkner and Simon Tuttle.

February, 1774 — Record of selectmen having paid William Barker four pounds for keeping school, also to Josiah Piper and John Davis. Other items relative to school expenses are not specific, for instance four pounds was paid to Lt. Heald for the school in his "Squadran"; also two pounds to Nathaniel Faulkner for the school in his "Society"; also to Capt. Samuel Hayward three pounds for a school and a similar amount to John Hunt "for a school".

The above is the complete record with respect to school instruction for the first forty years of the life of Acton after its incorporation.

APPENDIX VI

LIST OF ACTON MEN WHO SERVED IN THE REVOLUTION AS COMPILED BY REV. JAMES T. WOODBURY

(Known by him to be incomplete)

Adams, A. F.
Adams, John
Barker, David (Died at Ticonderoga)
Barker, Francis (Drummer)
Barker, John
Barker, Joseph
Barker Joseph 2nd
Barker, Samuel
Barker, William
Barrow, Elias
Billings, Ephraim (most of war)
Billings, James
Billings, Jonathan
Blanchard, Luther (Fifer)
Brabrook, Benjamin
Brabrook, Joseph
Brooks, Daniel
Brooks, David
Brooks, George F.
Brooks, Joseph
Brooks, Paul
Brooks, Seth, Sgt.
Brooks, Silas
Brown, Joseph (Shot at Bunker Hill, ball extracted and he shot it back at Saratoga)
Brown, Oliver
Chaffin, David
Chaffin, Elias
Chaffin, Francis (alarmed Joseph Reed)
Chaffin, John
Chaffiin, Joseph (most of war)
Chaffin, Robert
Cole, John
Conant, Silas
Cutting, William
Davis, A. C.
Davis, Amos
Davis, Daniel (present capture of Burgoyne)
Davis, David
Davis, Elijah
Davis, Ephraim
Davis, Ezekiel
Davis, Flint
Davis, Isaac (Capt) (killed Concord Fight)
Davis, James
Davis, John
Davis, Jonas
Davis, Josiah (brother of Isaac)
Davis, Reuben (present capture of Burgoyne)
Davis, Samuel
Davis, Stephen
Derby, Thomas (killed in battle)
Dexter, John
Dudley, Ephraim
Edwards, John
Edwards, Nathaniel
Emerson, Oliver, Sgt.
Faulkner, A.
Faulkner, Francis (present capture of Burgoyne)
Faulkner, James
Faulkner, John
Faulkner, Nathaniel
Fitch, Samuel
Fletcher, James (volunteered at Concord Fight at age 16 and served throughout war without pay)
Fletcher, Jonas
Fletcher, Joseph

Fletcher, Peter
Flint, Daniel
Forbush, David, Orderly Sgt. (Covered with blood of Isaac Davis at Concord Fight.)
Forbush, Ephraim
Gilbert, Jude
Hapgood, Abraham
Hapgood, Ephraim
Hapgood, John
Hapgood, John Jr.
Harris, Joseph
Hayward, Benjamin (most of war)
Hayward, James (Killed Lexington April 19, 1775)
Hayward, Josiah
Hayward, John Lt.
Hayward, Samuel
Hayward, Samuel Jr.
Hayward, Simon
Hayward, Stephen
Hayward, Titus (colored, hired by Simon Tuttle)
Heald, Isreal
Heald, John (Capt. Continental Army)
Heald, Jonas
Hosmer, Abner (killed Concord Fight)
Hosmer, Ephraim
Hosmer, Jonathan (died in Army)
Hosmer, Samuel
Hosmer, Stephen
Houghton, Oliver
Hunt, Jonas
Hunt, Nathan
Hunt, Paul
Hunt, Simon
Hunt, Simon Jr.
Jones, Aaron
Lampson, John
Law, James
Law, Reuben
Law, Stephen
Law, Stephen Jr.
Law, Thomas
Law, Titus
Litchfield, John
Locke, Joseph
Marsh, Nathan
Mayfield, George Sgt.
Munroe, Jonas
Noyes, Josiah
Noyes, Thomas
Oliver, John
Parker, Jonas
Parker, Josiah
Parlin, Asa
Parlin, Nathan
Parlin, Samuel
Piper, Joseph (clerk)
Piper, Phillip
Piper, Samuel (at Ticonderoga)
Prescott, Benjamin
Prescott, John
Procter, Abel
Reed, Joseph (most of war)
Richardson, Moses
Robbins, Ephraim
Robbins, George
Robbins, John
Robbins, John Jr.
Robbins, Jonathan
Robbins, Joseph (Capt.)
Robbins, Joseph Jr. (Capt.)
Robbins, Phillip
Robbins, Robert
Russell, Amos
Russell, James
Sawtelle Eleazer
Shepherd, Jonas
Shepherd, Stephen (most of war)
Shurland, James
Smith, Solomon (capture of Burgoyne)

Stratton, Jonathan
Temple, Samuel (through the war, an unusual soldier)
Thomas, William
Thorpe, Thomas, Ord, Sgt. (Continental Army through the war, last survivor Concord Fight, died Acton, age 96)
Tuttle, Samuel
Tuttle, Simon
Wetherbee, Ammi
Wetherbee, Edward (gave alarm up Simon Tuttle's road to Littleton, also at capture of Burgoyne)

Wetherbee, Oliver
Wheeler, Ezra
Wheeler, Hezekiah
Wheeler, John
Wheeler, John Procter
Wheeler, Jude
Wheeler, Nehemiah
Wheeler, Oliver
Wheeler, Roger
Wheeler, Sampson
Wheeler, Samuel
Wheeler, Thomas
Wheeler, Timothy
White, Daniel
White, Mark
Woods, Moses
Wright, Samuel
Young, Abraham

Total 169

The above total is interesting since at the time of the Revolution Acton had a total population of 769.

APPENDIX VII

A PARTIAL RECORD OF THE SERVICE OF ACTON MEN IN THE REVOLUTION

1. In February of 1776 a new organization of militia was formed and Concord, Lexington, Weston, Acton and Lincoln were assigned to the third regiment with Eleazer Brooks as colonel, Francis Faulkner, Lt. colonel. The Acton company had Simon Hunt as captain, John Heald 1st Lt., and Benjamn Brabrook 2nd Lt. This contingent saw service at Dorchester Heights in March of 1776.
2. In September of 1776 another contingent was formed to which Concord contributed 23 men, Lexington 16 men, Acton 15 men and Lincoln 12 men. Rev. Moses Adams served as Chaplain. Simon Hunt was captain of one company. This contingent saw service at White Plains.
3. Another company of 89 men also served at Dorchester. In it were five from Acton, four from Lincoln and three from Bedford.
4. In November of 1776 a regiment of 670 men under Col. Samuel Thatcher of Cambridge marched to New York and New Jersey. In it there were thirteen men from Acton
5. In July of 1777 a contingent went to Rhode Island. Abishai Brown of Concord was captain and Daniel Davis of Acton 1st lieutenant.
6. In September of 1777 a volunteer company of sixty three men from Concord and Acton was present at the surrender of Burgoyne. John Buttrick of Concord was in command and John Heald of Acton was a lieutenant as was also Silas Marr of Concord.
7. On November 28, 1778 Simon Hunt was captain of a guard company at Cambridge.
8. On April 20, 1778 the town of Concord hired ten men for the Continental Army of which five men were from Acton and five from Lincoln.
9. On April 27th and June 8th the town of Concord hired five men for six weeks and eight men for nine months for the Continental Army. Five of these were from Acton.
10. In September of 1779 a contingent was organized to serve for two months in Rhode Island. For this Concord provided four men, Acton eleven, Bedford seven, Lincoln nine and Carlisle seven.
11. On December 2, 1780 the town of Concord hired ten men from Acton, ten men from Lincoln and six from Carlisle for three years service in the Continental Army.

APPENDIX VIII

LIST OF PHYSICIANS WHO HAVE PRACTICED IN ACTON

1. Dr. Joseph Fletcher is mentioned as having been refunded a sum of approximately seventeen pounds on March 13, 1744, which same he had loaned to the town.

2. John Swift, son of Rev. John Swift. Graduated from Harvard in 1762. Died in 1775, the same year as his father.

3. Abraham Skinner, came from Woodstock, Connecticut, in 1781. Married Sarah Faulkner, daughter of Francis, in 1788.

4. Peter Goodnow, came from Bolton and commenced practice in Acton on October 12, 1812. He removed from town February 18, 1827 and established himself as a merchant in Boston.

5. Samuel Young is listed as serving on the school committee in 1809.

6. Bela Gardner resided in Acton from 1823 to 1828 during which time a daughter Mary was born in 1826.

7. Harris Cowdry was born at South Reading (now Wakefield) Mass. September 23, 1803. He studied with Dr. Hunt of that town and graduated from the Berkshire Medical Institute, Pittsfield, Mass. in 1824, and commenced practice in Acton in 1826. One of the inducements that brought him to the town was Miss Abagail Davis to whom he was married in 1826. He excelled as a general practitioner for fifty years. He was an early member of the Evangelical Church, zealous in the causes of temperance and anti-slavery. He was superintendent of schools for sixteen years and a constant member of the village choir. He was one of the fortunate men who never grow old. He was active in the Centennial celebration at Concord on April 19, 1875 but the severity of that raw, chilly day gave rise to a fatal attack of influenza which resulted in his death on May 6. His son Arthur became a successful physician in Stoneham, Mass. His daughter Helen, married Dr. Charles Little, who subsequently practiced in Acton.

8. Charles Little was born in Boscowen N. H. and graduated from Dartmouth College in 1860 and received his medical degree from the same institution in 1863. During the same autumn he entered the Navy as assistant surgeon where he remained until the end of the war. He died November 16, 1869.

9. A Dr. Reuben Green is mentioned as having the first West Acton Post Office located in his office in 1848. His name also appears on the committee in charge of the ceremonials connected with the dedication of the Davis Monument.

10. Dr. Charles Tuttle is listed as a pall bearer for the remains of Davis, Hosmer and Hayward at the dedication of the monument in 1851.

11. Isaiah Hutchins was born in Westford, Mass. September 23, 1829. He attended the Lawrence Academy at Groton and graduated from the Worcester Medical College in 1852 and the same year began practice in Acton. He was in the Union Army.

12. Charles B. Sanders was born in Lowell, Mass., February 19, 1844. He received his early education in Berwick, Me. On August 11, 1862 he enlisted as a private in the 13th New Hampshire Volunteers. On March 4, 1864 he was discharged by order of the War Department to receive a commission as first lieutenant in the United States colored troops and was assigned to the 30th regiment. He served through the Wilderness Campaign, was captured at the battle of the "crater" at Petersburg, and was confined in a rebel prison at Columbia, S. C. for seven months. His medical education was obtained at Bowdoin and Harvard from which latter institution he received his certificate to practice medicine in June of 1869. In July of 1875 he located in Acton. On September 4, 1878 he married Elizabeth Taylor, daughter of Moses Taylor.

13. Samuel A. Christie was born April 17, 1854 in Philadelphia. He was self taught in all he knew above the grammar grades. He studied Latin, Greek and Botany because of his consuming desire, at an early age, to become a physician. Refusing to study for the Presbyterian ministry at the behest of his father he worked for several years in both the Elgin and Waltham watch factories. In the latter city he met and married Ida Ellen Dearborn of Pembroke, N. H. At the age of forty four he commenced the study of medicine at Tufts, was obliged to stop for two years to earn money, and at last was forced to transfer to a less expensive Medical school, the Boston College of Physicians and Surgeons. He graduated in 1904 and immediately, at the age of fifty four, began practice in South Acton, where he worked for seventeen years until the time of his death on February 3, 1922. He was greatly interested in town affairs and served on the school committee. His son James Christie has been a successful physician in Littleton for many years.

14. Frank Edwin Tasker was born in Northwood, N. H. in 1863. He graduated from Dartmouth Medical School in 1892 and from the New York Post Graduate School in 1893. He practiced in Haverhill, Mass. from 1893 to 1895. From that date until his death in 1938 he practiced in West Acton. His wife, Lavina Hanson, was a native of Pittsfield, N. H.

15. George Herman Tuttle was born in 1866. He began general practice in 1891. For some time he was located in East Cambridge. He came to Acton about 1918 where he continued until his death in 1941. He attended Harvard College and later studied in Germany. He served in the Spanish American War. From 1926 to 1933 he was connected with the Massachusetts General Hospital as a specialist on diabetes. He was for many years Acton's most inveterate fisherman.

16. Louis Allen lived for a time in the old Stevens Hayward house and carried on a more or less casual practice. He had practically retired when he came to town. The old mansion was burned in the early summer of 1912 and subsequently the sisters, Miss Charlotte Allen and Mrs. Hughes built on the site the bungalow now inhabited by the Roger Crafts.

17. Frank J. Barker was born in Marlboro, N. H. circa 1860; attended Dartmouth College where he obtained his M. D. degree and then attended Harvard. He came to Acton about 1895 from Portsmouth, R. I. and remained until 1908. He then took two years special work at Harvard, practiced in Milton for a time and came to Concord about 1911. He died in Carthage N. Y. as a result of a heart condition induced by overwork during the influenza epidemic of 1919. He was an active member of Acton's first Board of Health.

18. Frederick King Shaw was born October 10, 1871 in Charlestown, Mass. and died April 5, 1926 in Concord, Mass. where he is buried in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery. He obtained his M.D. degree from Harvard Medical College in 1899 and interned in St. Vincent's Hospital, New York City, and at the Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston. He started practice in Acton in 1908 having moved ther from Somerville. In 1918 he moved to Concord where he remained until the time of his death. He was a captain in the Army medical corps in World War I in which he enlisted, a member of Concord Masonic Lodge, and a descendant of Roger Shaw who migrated from England to Cambridge in 1636.

19. Willis Middleton graduated from Tufts Medical School in 1901 and at one time was instructor in anatomy there. He lived during his Acton sojourn on the Henry Smith place on Brook St. where he utilized the old pencil factory as a rare bird aviary.

20. Ernest A. Mayell was born in Newton, Mass. on December 4, 1875. In his early childhood the family moved to Watertown. He graduated from Tufts Medical School in 1902 and interned at the South Department of the Boston City Hospital. In 1904 he was married to Laura M. Smith of Barrington, Rhode Island and took up practice in Newton, Mass. until 1909 at which time, due to impaired

health, he moved to Acton and purchased the green houses and property of the estate of Henry M. Smith. During the influenza epidemic of 1918 he was requested to get back into practice and did serve the state in Maynard and Lowell. He was school physician from 1920 to 1948. He also served on the staff of the Emerson Hospital in Concord and was president for one year. He retired from active practice in 1948. Mrs. Maycll died April 17, 1951. She was a direct descendant of Peregrine White of Mayflower fame.

21. Omar Lawrence Clark was born in West Concord on December 14, 1897. When he was five the family moved to Acton. He attended the Tufts Medical School for five years and then Six months at the Middlesex Medical School from which he received the M.D. degree in June of 1923. His internship was at the Leonard Hospital in Troy, N. Y. following which he came to Acton in 1924. He has served as Medical Examiner for the 6th Middlesex District from April 1940 to May of 1951 at which time ill health and press of business induced his resignation. He was Medical Examiner for the Selective Service during World War II.

22. Hall Staples was born in South Windham, Maine in 1871. He graduated from the Dartmouth Medical School in 1891 and practised in Grafton, Vt. from 1891 to 1908; came to Acton in 1908 and lived there until his death in 1917. Had he lived another year he would have had the benefit of Insulin as a preventive of diabetes which caused his demise.

Dr. Staples was the old school "Horse and Buggy Doctor". In Vermont he kept a string of twelve Morgan horses and it was not unusual for him to drive fourteen miles to Windham to attend a patient, return home, and immediately start for Cambridgeport, an equal distance in the opposite direction. He still used his horses in Acton until about 1913 when he purchased his first automobile, a Stanley Steamer. Since this vehicle required too much nursing for a rapid start on a cold morning he soon changed to a chain drive Waltham Buckboard, a contraption that was well known throughout the countryside. Upon occasion it would tip completely over but was so light that he was able to right it alone and continue to his destination.

23. Paul Porter Gates (son of Acton's blacksmith for many years, Emerick Gates) was born in Acton on September 25, 1908. He received the B. A. degree from Harvard in 1932 and graduated from Tufts Medical School in 1936. He began practice in Acton in August 1938. From July 1942 to December 1945 he was Lieutenant Commander in the Medical Corps of the Navy Reserve.

25. Wilfred W. Forbes was born in Brookline, Mass. on February 15, 1912. After attending Boston University for three years he trans-

ferred to the School of Medicine from which he was graduated in 1935. He began practice in Acton in 1946 after five years service in the Navy in World War II. He is assistant surgeon for the Fire Department and Medical Director of the Civil Defense Committee.

26. Donnell W. Boardman was born in Plainfield, N. J. on February 25, 1913. He received the B. A. degree from Yale University in 1934 and the M. D. degree from Columbia University in 1939. He moved to Acton in October of 1946 and opened an office in Maynard immediately and another in Littleton in July of 1950. He joined the Boston University Medical Faculty in September of 1947 and entered into association with Dr. Henry S. Harvey in August 1951. He married Elizabeth F. Hazelton and has five children.

27. On page 298 Fletcher lists Paul C. Kittridge of Littleton as commencing to practice in Acton in 1830 but does not make clear that he resided in Acton.

28. Dr. Joseph P. Day, an army surgeon, practiced briefly in South Acton.

29. In his notes Dr. Mayell mentions a Dr. Annis as having been school physician for South Acton in 1918.

30. John M. Miles was born in Temple, N. H. where his father was the minister. He was educated at a medical college. He practiced in Boxborough and Littleton and settled in Acton in 1843 and was active until his death in March of 1865 at the age of sixty three.

APPENDIX IX

LIST OF THE FIRST FIFTEEN DEACONS OF ACTON CHURCH

Name	*Date chosen*	*Died*	*Age*
Joseph Fletcher	Dec. 15, 1738	Sept. 11, 1746	61
John Heald	Dec. 15, 1738	May 16, 1775	82
Jonathan Hosmer		June 25, 1775	64
John Brooks		March 6, 1777	76
Samuel Hayward	Sept. 29, 1775	March 6, 1795	78
Francis Faulkner	Sept. 29, 1775	August 5, 1805	78
Joseph Brabrook	Sept. 29, 1775	April 27, 1812	73
Simon Hunt	April 19, 1792	April 27, 1820	86
Josiah Noyes	March 27, 1806	Moved to Westmoreland N. H. Oct. 16, 1808	
Benjamin Hayward	March 27, 1806	Excused June 15, 1821	
John Wheeler	April 18, 1811	Dec. 17, 1824	64
John White	April 18, 1811	April 3, 1824	54
Phineas Wheeler	June 15, 1811	August 3, 1838	65
Daniel F. Barker	June 15, 1811	Dec. 16, 1840	61
Silas Hosmer	June 15, 1811	June 26, 1872	80

The church records fail to give the dates of appointment for Deacons Jonathan Hosmer and John Brooks.

APPENDIX X

ACTON MEN WHO HAVE SERVED IN THE STATE LEGISLATURE FROM 1735 to 1950

(a) Members of the House of Representatives.

Daniel Fletcher	1768
Josiah Hayward	1774, 1775
Mark White	1776
Simon Hunt	1780
Francis Faulkner	1782, 1785
Thomas Noyes	1787, 1789
Ephraim Robbins	1790
Jonas Brooks	1791, 1802
Asa Parlin	1803
Jonas Brooks	1804
Samuel Jones	1805, 1806
Jonas Brooks	1807 - 1811
Stevens Hayward	1812
Joseph Noyes	1813 - 1818, 1821
Francis Tuttle	1823 - 1827
Stevens Hayward	1828, 1829
Francis Tuttle	1830, 1831
Nathan Brooks	1836, 1837, 1838, 1840
Phineas Harrington	1841, 1842
Ivory Keyes	1843
Daniel Wetherbee	1844, 1845
Ivory Keyes	1846
Daniel Wetherbee	1848
James T. Woodbury	1850, 1851
Moses Hayward	1852
Daniel Wetherbee	1853
Joseph Noyes	1854
Aaron Handley	1855
William D. Tuttle	1856
Daniel Wetherbee	1857
John Fletcher	1861
Aaron C. Handley	1863
Luther Conant	1866
George W. Gates	1870
George C. Wright	1873
Moses Taylor	1881
Charles W. Parker	1884
Luther Conant	1886

Aaron C. Handley	1889

(b) Members of the State Senate.

Stevens Hayward	1844, 1845
Winthrop E. Faulkner	1853, 1854
John Fletcher	1870, 1871

1902 Vote of 23rd Middlesex District for Representative in General Court. District comprised of Acton, Ayer, Littleton, Shirley, Westford.

Webster C. Robbins, Acton (Republican)	631
Edwin A. Phalen, Acton (Democrat)	238

1906 Vote of 23rd Middlesex District.

Delette H. Hall, Acton (Republican)	889
Gardner W. Prouty, Littleton (Democrat)	412

By 1908 Acton had been shifted to the 11th Middlesex District. At the election that year the Socialist Party appeared on the ballot for the first time and polled one vote in Acton. The vote of the town was as follows: James B. Carr, Socialist, Chelmsford 1; James E. Smith, Littleton, Democrat 72; Elisha D. Stone, Ayer, Republican 256.

In the hectic election of 1912 the Progressive (Bull Moose) Party took a considerable slice off the nominal Republican vote but not enough to elect a Democrat. The District as a whole, comprised of Acton, Ayer, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Littleton and Westford voted as follows: John D. Carney, Ayer, Democrat 679; Samuel L. Taylor, Westford, Republican 902; James B. Tuttle, Acton, Progressive 635. In Acton the vote was Carney 76, Taylor 167, Tuttle 139.

1914 Vote of 11th Middlesex District.

	Acton	District
Edgar H. Hall, Acton (Republican)	277	1126
Charles F. Johnson, Littleton, (Democrat)	62	614
John L. Kennison, Ayer (Progressive)	48	375

1915 Edgar H. Hall had no opposition and carried the district by a vote of 1675 to 9.

1930 Ayer was removed from 11th district and Bedford put in its place.

1932 Vote of 11th Middlesex District.

	Acton	District
Horace F. Tuttle, Acton (Republican)	1001	4693
Harold Harrington, Westford (Democrat)	175	1920

APPENDIX XI

THE FIRST FIFTEEN ACTON MEN TO RECEIVE A COLLEGE DEGREE

1. Nathan Davis: Born 1737; graduated from Harvard 1759; ordained minister at Dracut October 20, 1765. Removed to Boston and became a chaplain at Fort Independence. Died March 4, 1803.

2. John Swift: Only child of Rev. John Swift; born November 18, 1741; graduated Harvard 1762; settled in Acton as a physician; died of small pox 1775.

3. Asa Piper: Son of Josiah Piper: born March 7, 1757; graduated from Harvard 1778; ordained at Wakefield, N. H. 1785; was there as late as 1835.

4. Solomon Adams: Son of Lt. John Adams; born March 18, 1761; Graduated Harvard 1788; ordained at Middleton October 23, 1793; died September, 1813

5. Daniel Brooks: Born April 5, 1767; graduated Harvard 1794; settled as trader in Westmoreland, N. H.; died in Springfield, Vt.

6. Thomas Noyes: Son of Thomas, born February 5, 1769; graduated Harvard 1795; ordained pastor Needham, Mass. June 10, 1799; dismissed 1833 by mutual consent.

7. Luther Wright: Born April 19, 1770; graduated Harvard 1796; pastor at Medway, Mass. and Barrington, R. I.

8. Moses Adams: Son Rev. Moses Adams; born November 28, 1777; graduated Harvard 1797; settled as physician at Ellsworth, Me., was sherriff of Lincoln Co.

9. William Emerson Faulkner: Son of Francis Faulkner; born October 23, 1776; graduated Harvard 1797; Read law with his brother in law, Hon. Jabez Upham of Brookfield and formed partnership with him.

10. Josiah Adams: Son of Rev. Moses Adams; born November 3, 1781; graduated Harvard 1801; admitted to bar 1807; settled in Framingham.

11. Luther Faulkner: Son of Francis Faulkner; born May 7, 1799; graduated Harvard 1802; merchant in Boston.

12. Jonathan Edwards Scott: Native of Nova Scotia but resided in Acton for some years before going to Harvard; graduated in 1802; became sea captain.

13. Joseph Adams: Son of Rev. Moses Adams; born September 25, 1783; graduated Harvard 1803; settled as an attorney in Cambridge.

14. John Ruggles Cutting: Son of William Cutting; born November 6, 1778; graduated Dartmouth 1802; ordained at Waldoborough, Me. 1802.

15. Henry Durant: Son Lt. Henry Durant; born June 18, 1802; graduated at Yale 1828; subsequently on the Yale faculty.

Of these fifteen men all except the first two and the last were prepared for college by Rev. Moses Adams.

APPENDIX XII

DEPOSITIONS OF THOMAS THORP AND OTHERS CONCERNING THE EVENTS OF APRIL 19TH 1775.

First Deposition of Thomas Thorp

I, Thomas Thorp of Acton testify that I am in my eightieth year and have lived here ever since I was fifteen years old. I was a member of Capt. Isaac Davis's Company which was formed in November 1774. We usually met twice a week for drill. Capt. Davis was a gunsmith. He was esteemed a man of courage and prudence and had the love and veneration of all his company. On the morning of the 19th of April, 1775 I had notice that the regulars were coming to Concord. I took my equipments and proceeded to Capt. Davis's house. I passed the house of the Rev. Mr. Swift. His son, Doctor Swift, made me a present of a cartridge box as he saw I had none. I well remember that there was on the outside a piece of red cloth in the shape of a heart. Several of the company before me and some of them were putting powder flour on their hair. About half the company formed there and the remainder, as many as forty in the whole, joined us early in the day and most of them before the fight. We made a short stay near Col. Barrets and proceeded to the north Bridge where we formed a great collection of armed men from Concord and other towns—there were several hundreds—cannot say how many. The officers seemed to be talking by themselves and the British were then at the Bridge. Our officers joined the others; and in a few minutes, not exceeding five, Capt. Davis returned to his company and said something which I do not recollect and gave the word "march". It seemed to have been agreed that Capt. Davis should go in front. He had not taken the right of the other companies as has been stated. The Concord minute company was the oldest and as such had taken its place at muster a short time before. Our company, however, marched in front and Major Buttrick and Col. Robinson were with Capt. Davis.

As we were advancing the British began to take up the bridge; on which we quickened our pace and ran towards them. They desisted and joined their ranks.

I saw a ball strike the water on my right and some other guns were fired over our heads. A volley was then discharged at us and Luther Blanchard our fifer was wounded. We were then ordered to fire and did so. The fire was returned and Capt. Davis and Abner Hosmer, one of his men, were killed and Ezekiel Davis, a brother of the Captain, had a ball pass through his hat. I did not understand that he was injured but have since understood that his head was

slightly touched by the ball.

Two of the enemy were killed — one with a hatchet after being wounded and helpless. This act was a matter of horror to us all. I saw him sitting up and wounded as we had passed the bridge. Our company and most of the others persued but in great disorder and went to an eminence back of Elisha Jones' and stood behind a wall forty rods or more from where the British had joined a reinforcement. In a short time we returned over the bridge but did not form in any order. As we stood there the detachment from Col. Barretts returned and passed us and might easily have been taken prisoners if we had not been in such confusion. I do not remember that anyone there assumed command.

About this time the troops left the village and after some delay to take refreshments the Americans persued and various skirmishes took place till the British encamped on Bunker Hill a little before sunset. It was impossible for me to know that all our company pursued; but I did not know at the time nor since that any one deserted.

I cannot say how many were at the bridge in the morning but I should say not more than forty or fifty at most. I could see a great number on Lee's Hill about a mile distant. I should judge there were three or four hundred. I saw them in the morning at the time of the fight.

Signed THOMAS THORP

Middlesex Co. July 10, 1835 Then Thomas Thorp who is and long has been personally known to me as a man of truth subscribed the foregoing affidavit and made oath that the same is true according to his best knowledge and belief.

Before me Francis Tuttle, Justice of the Peace.

Second Deposition of Thomas Thorp.

I Thomas Thorp testify that according to the best of my recollections and judgement the number of the British at and near the North Bridge before the fight was about eighty but they were scattered about so that I cannot be certain; there might be more. It was supposed to be one company. I saw the detachment return from Col. Barrett's. It consisted of one company as I judged by their appearance.

I should think the reinforcements that came out from the village consisted of about the same number but of this I am not so certain. The British retreated from the bridge immediately after returning our fire and there were no guns fired afterwards till they had left the village. I have no remembrance of seeing or hearing Col. Barret or Major Butrick after the enemy retreated from the Bridge. The British left the village about noon without any interruption from the Americans.

I remained in the army during the whole war and am now a pentioner. I never knew or heard till lately that any of our men leaped over the wall on the north side of the causeway to fire at the British at the bridge. We had no time to fire but once as the British retreated in great haste.

I may have been mistaken in stating in my first deposition that Davis and Hosmer were not killed by the volley; it might have been otherwise as there was very little time between the volley and the return fire.

THOMAS THORP

Middlesex Co. Dec. 2, 1835 Then Thomas Thorp who is known to me as a man of truth made oath that the above affidavit is true according to his best knowledge and belief.

Before me Simon Hosmer, Justice of the Peace.

First Deposition of Solomon Smith

I Solomon Smith of Acton testify that I am now in my eighty second year. I have lived in Acton from about the year 1760 to the present time. I was a member of Capt. Isaac Davis's company of minute men and was in the fight at Concord in 1775. We turned out to drill and exercise twice a week from the November preceeding. I think the company consisted of about forty. The company was raised by voluntary enlistment. The town paid us eight pence for every half day. John Hayward was the lieutenant and John Heald the ensign. They were both good officers and had the confidence of their men. I was alarmed on the 19th of April about day break. I gave notice to several of the company went to Capt. Davis's house and found several of the company there. His family were sick. He had four children some of whom had the canker rash and the others were unwell. Capt Davis appeared to be heavy hearted. One of the men used some light language and was reproved by Capt. Davis.

We set out for Concord when the sun was something more than an hour high. Other members of the company joined us on the road and the remainder in the course of the forenoon most of them before the fight. We made some delay near Col. Barrett's and then proceeded to the high ground north of the bridge. There was a considerable number of men from Concord and other towns assembled there and others were fast joining them. Immediately after our arrival the officers of the companies including ours went by themselves a few rods and held a consultation for a few minutes. Capt. Davis then came to the head of his company, and drew his sword and said "I haven't a man that is afraid to go" and gave the word "march". We proceeded toward the bridge in double file. Major Buttrick and Col. Robinson marched with Capt. Davis. I do not know the order the other com-

panies fell in. When we came first on the ground Capt. Davis took the left of the Concord minute men as he had done a few weeks before at a muster and he went from this position when he took the front as above stated.

After we began to move the British were beginning to take up the bridge. Someone, I believe it was Major Buttrick, remonstrated in a loud voice and about the same time they desisted and formed for action. I next saw a ball from the enemy strike in the river and heard the report of two others directly after which were thought not to be aimed at us. A volley immediately followed by which Luther Blanchard our fifer was slightly wounded and hearing him cry out Major Buttrick exclaimed "Fire, for God's sake fire". The order was obeyed and the British returned the fire and killed Capt. Davis and Abner Hosmer a private of his company and wounded Ezekiel Davis, a brother of the Captain, on the head. They then retreated towards the village. Two of the British were killed there. One was left on the ground wounded and in that situation was killed by an American with an hatchet. This act met with universal disapprobation and was excused only by the excitement and inexperience of the perpetrator. The enemy retreated until they met a reinforcement near the village. I do not know what proportion of the Americans followed over the bridge but our company and the Concord minute company very many others proceeded to an eminence on the east side of the road back of Elisha Jones' house behind a wall. It was perhaps forty rods from where the enemy had halted. After a short time we dispersed and without any regularity went back over the bridge. While we were there the detachment which had been to destroy stores at Col. Barrett's returned and passed without molestation. It was owing to our want of order and our confused state that they were not taken prisoners.

They passed the two of their number who had been killed and saw that the head of one had been split open. It was said that this circumstance gave them the impression that the Americans would give no quarter. It was soon after ascertained that the British were leaving the village and we followed after them without any order firing when we could and saw the last of them for that day on Bunker Hill. Capt. Davis was a man of great firmness and energy of character, an excellent officer and had the respect and esteem of who knew him. Lieutenant Hayward did all that could be done but it was felt at the time that the loss of our Captain was the cause of much of the confusion that followed.

Signed SOLOMON SMITH

Middlesex Co. July 10, 1835 Then Solomon Smith who is well known to me as a man of veracity subscribed the foregoing affidavit and

made oath that the same is true according to his best knowledge and belief.

Before me Francis Tuttle, Justice of the Peace
Copy Attest Joseph W. Tuttle, Town Clerk.

Second Deposition of Solomon Smith

I Solomon Smith testify that according to the best of my recollection and judgement the number of the enemy at the bridge at the time of the fight at Concord was only sufficient for one company, perhaps about eighty. The detachment which went to Col. Barrett's was of about the same number. They passed near me as they returned. The reinforcements from the village appeared to me to consist of about the same number. I saw them from the hill back of Elisha Jones' house. I did not notice that there were troops on Lee's Hill but heard of it soon after.

There were no guns fired on either side after the British returned our fire till the troops left the village.

I have no remembrance of seeing or hearing from Col. Barrett or Major Buttrick after the fight. The enemy left the village about noon.

I was in the Revolutionary Army thirteen months and am now a retreated with quick step immediately on returning our fire.
pensioner.

Our company marched to Concord by the Strawberry hill road: when we arrived near Col. Barrett's we left that road and went partly in a crossroad and partly across the fields in nearly a straight line course to the widow Brown's tavern. We took the back or east road to the high ground.

The bodies of Davis and Hosmer were carried as I was told to the house of Major Buttrick very soon after they were killed and before the detachment returned from Col. Barrett's.

I did not see any of the Americans leap over the wall on the north side of the road to fire at the British at the bridge nor did I ever hear so till of late. There was no time nor occasion to do so as the enemy

I may have been mistaken in saying in my former deposition that Davis and Hosmer were killed by the return fire and not by the volley, there was but very little time intervened between them.

SOLOMON SMITH

Middlesex Co., Dec. 2, 1835 Then Solomon Smith who is known to me as a man of truth made oath that the above affidavit is true according to his best knowledge and belief.

Before me Simon Hosmer Justice of the Peace
Copy Attest Joseph W. Tuttle, Town Clerk

Deposition of Charles Handley

I Charles Handley of Acton testify that I am a native of Concord. At the time of the Concord Fight I was in my thirteenth year and lived at the tavern kept by Mrs. Brown nearly a mile northwest of the north bridge. At the time of the fight the British consisting of about one hundred had returned from Col. Barrett's as far as the tavern and three or four of the officers were in the house taking some drink. The soldiers were sitting by the roadside and some drink was carried out to them. The officers offered to pay and Mrs. Brown declined. They told her not to be afraid for they should do her no harm and paid for their drink.

I heard the guns at the bridge but the British did not appear to hear them. They marched on very soon but did not appear in haste. It was always said that they had no knowledge of the fight till they passed the bridge and saw the man that had been killed. I heard at the time and many times since that one of the two British who were killed at the bridge was killed with a hatchet after he was left wounded. The young man who killed him told me in 1807 that it had worried him very much but he thought he was doing right at the time.

I saw Capt. Davis' company as they came from Acton. I first saw them coming through the fields north of Barrett's Mills and they kept the fields till they came to the road at Mrs. Brown's tavern. They there took the back road leading to the bridge. They marched quite fast to the musick of a fife and drum. I remember the tune but am not sure of its name; think it was called the White Cockade.

Middlesex Co. Dec. 1, 1835. Personally appeared Charles Handley who has for many years been known to me as a man of varacity and made oath the above affidavit is true according to his best knowledge and belief.

Before me Josiah Adams Justice of the Peace
Copy Attest Jos. W. Tuttle, Town Clerk.

Deposition of the wife of Capt. Davis

I Hannah Leighton of Acton testify that I am eighty nine years of age. Isaac Davis who was killed in Concord Fight in 1775 was my husband.

He was then thirty years of age. We had four children, the youngest about fifteen months old.

They were all unwell when he left me in the morning some of them with the canker rash.

The alarm was given early in the morning and my husband lost no time in making ready to go to Concord with his company. A con-

siderable number of them came to the house and made their cartridges there. The sun was from one to two hours high when they marched for Concord.

My husband said but little that morning. He seemed serious and thoughtful but never seemed to hesitate as to the course of his duty. As he led the company from the house he turned himself round and seemed to have something to communicate. He only said take good care of the children and was soon out of sight. In the afternoon he was brought home a corpse. He was placed in my bedroom till the funeral. His countenance was pleasant and seemed little altered. The bodies of Abner Hosmer one of the company and of James Hayward one of the militia company who was killed in Lexington in the afternoon were brought by their friends to the house where the funeral of the three was attended together.

HANNAH LEIGHTON

Middlesex Co. August 14, 1835 Then the above named Hannah Leighton who has long been known to me as a respectable and credible woman made oath that the foregoing affidavit by her suscribed is true according to her best knowledge and belief.

Before me Francis Tuttle Justice of the Peace
Copy Attest Joseph W. Tuttle Town Clerk

Bradley Stone's Deposition

I, Bradley Stone, of Acton, aged forty-two, certify that in the year eighteen hundred and twenty nine, or thirty, while I was a tenant of a part of the house in Concord belonging to William Parkman, Esquire, of that place, I had a conversation with him relative to the Concord Fight of April 19th, 1775. I had read the "History of the Fight, by Ezra Ripley, D. D. and other citizens of Concord" and had a curiosity to know more of the history of that day. I asked him what part he took in the affairs of the day. He replied that he did not bear arms but acted as one of the Committee of Vigilance, and he explained to me the duties of that committee. He said he was present on the hill when the Companies were formed, as they arrived in the morning. Capt Davis, of Acton, he said, arrived after most or all of the companies had formed, and placed his company on the left. Capt. Davis and his officers then went to the other officers, who were standing in consultation; they were advising with the Committee of Vigilance, as to what should be done, as to the military stores at Col. Barrett's house. A detachment of the enemy was supposed to be about to make an attack, and Major Buttrick ordered the Captain of one of the Concord Companies to meet them. The Captain replied that he

would rather not. Major Buttrick turned to Capt. Davis and asked him if he was afraid to go. Capt. Davis replied promptly, "No, I am not and there isn't a man in my company that is!" Deacon Parkman said he saw Capt. Davis, immediately after, march his company toward the enemy, and soon after heard the firing, as he was going toward Col. Barrett's in the discharge of his duty.

Deacon Parkman spoke in high terms of approbation of the Acton Company, and particularly of the dignified and soldierlike appearance of their Commander. He said it was his belief that if Capt. Davis had not been killed, not one of the enemy would have returned to Boston. I asked him how it was that Concord had taken all the praise? He replied, with emphasis and feeling, "It is wrong — Acton ought to have the credit of it."

BRADLEY STONE

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Middlesex, ss. August 16, 1845 Then Bradley Stone, who is personally known to me as a man of veracity, made oath that the foregoing affidavit, by him subscribed, contains the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, relative to the subject matter thereof. Before me

SAMUEL HAYWARD, Justice of the Peace

APPENDIX XIII

MODERATORS PRESIDING AT THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETINGS, 1735 - 1953

1735, 1736	John Heald
1737	John Davis
1738, 1739	Joseph Fletcher
1740	Gershom Davis
1741	Zacheriah Emery
1742, 1743	Joseph Fletcher
1744	John Brooks
1745, 1746	Joseph Fletcher
1747 - 1748	John Brooks
1749 - 1751	Dea. John Heald
1752	John Brooks
1753 - 1758	Dea. John Heald
1759	Capt. Daniel Fletcher
1760	Dea. John Heald
1761	Capt. Daniel Fletcher
1762	Dea. John Heald
1763 - 1770	Capt. Daniel Fletcher
1771	Capt. Samuel Hayward
1772	Jonathan Hosmer
1773, 1774	Capt. Daniel Fletcher
1775	Capt. Samuel Hayward
1776	Josiah Hayward
1777 - 1784	Ephraim Hosmer
1785	Capt. Joseph Robbins
1786, 1787	Ephraim Hosmer
1788 - 1792	Jonas Brooks
1793	Josiah Whitney
1794 - 1797	Jonas Brooks
1798	no record
1799, 1800	Jonas Brooks
1801 - 1803	John Edwards
1804	Jonas Brooks
1805 - 1808	John Robbins
1809 - 1813	Winthrop Faulkner
1814 - 1818	Joseph Noyes
1819	John Robbins
1820, 1821	Joseph Noyes
1822	Abraham Conant
1823	John Robbins
1824	Abraham Conant
1825 - 1828	Stevens Hayward
1829, 1830	John Robbins
1831, 1832	Stevens Hayward
1833	Francis Tuttle
1834	John White
1835	Ebenezer Wood
1836 - 1841	Stevens Hayward
1842	Winthrop Faulkner
1843	Eliab Grimes
1844 - 1846	Winthrop E. Faulkner
1847	Phineas Harrington
1848	Winthrop E. Faulkner
1849	Phineas Harrington
1850	Luther Conant, Sr.
1851	James T. Woodbury
1852 - 1860	Winthrop E. Faulkner
1861 - 1867	Luther Conant, Jr.
1868	Francis Dwight
1869, 1870	Luther Conant
1871	Francis Dwight
1872	Winthrop E. Faulkner
1873 - 1888	Luther Conant
1889	Alphonso A. Wyman
1890 - 1892	Luther Conant
1893	Alphonso A. Wyman
1894 - 1901	Luther Conant
1902 - 1904	Charles Kimball
1905	Luther Conant
1906 - 1932	A. Brooks Parker
1933 - 1953	Albert P. Durkee

APPENDIX XIV

BRIEF SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF THE SEVERAL CHURCHES IN ACTON

As has been noted in the body of the volume the church and the government were closely tied together in the early years of the colonies. A voter had of necessity to be a freeman and a church member. This restriction held firm for approximately two centuries in Massachusetts until relieved in 1833.

THE PURITAN CHURCH: This church, sometimes referred to as the old Congregational Church, had three ministers, namely, Rev. John Swift, Rev. Moses Adams, and Rev. Marshall Shedd. The first two died in service. Rev. Shedd was dismissed at his own request after eleven years.

Following the resignation of Rev. Shedd in May 1831, the old Acton Congregational Church was disrupted by doctrinal differences. Those holding to the original Trinitarian Faith withdrew. On January 6, 1832 the first meeting was called by general invitation and the following action was taken.

We the subscribers taking into consideration the importance of the stated preaching of the Gospel, do hereby agree to form a religious society in Acton by the name of the Evangelical Society in Acton.

And do hereby pledge ourselves to do all which shall seem meet and proper for the attainment of this glorious object.

Signed by

Stevens Hayward	Jotham Hunt
Phineas Wheeler	Adam Noyes
Amos Noyes	Stephen Weston
John Edwards	Luther Conant
Ephraim Hapgood	Simon Hapgood
Charles Tuttle	Joseph Wild
Asa Parker	Abraham Conant
Harriet Cowdrey	Silas Hosmer

On the twenty third of February following, at a meeting of the old Congregational Church, it was voted that thirteen male members and forty six females, be, according to their request, dismissed from the church, and recommended to the care of an ecclesiastic council to be by them called for the purpose of being formed into a church, in connection with the Evangelical Society in Acton. The council met and the present Evangelical Church of Acton was organized on March 13, 1832. In the meantime the chapel (now the property of the Acton Centre Women's Club) had been built and Rev. James Trask Woodbury was called as pastor and was ordained and installed on August

29, 1832.[1] After preaching twenty years he was dismissed at his own request on June 23, 1852 and thereafter lived in Milford, Massachusetts, where he died on January 15, 1861.

The liberal wing of the disrupted church continued to hold worship in the old church building for several years, but in 1859, the property was deeded to the town and became the Town House. It was so used until destroyed in the fire of 1862.

The persons who were taken into the church in its first several years are listed below for the information of those interested.

Admitted March 13, 1832, when organized.

Rhoda Wheeler	Lucy Wheeler	Harriet Davis
Lucinda Davis	Betsey Chaffin	Rebecca Billings
Hannah Burgess	Esther Billings	Susanna Edwards
Sarah Robbins	Susanna Wetherbee	Sukey Conant
Abagail Cowdrey	Eunice Weston	Eda Wheeler
Sally Parlin	Joanna Noyes	Abagail Keyes
Molly Hapgood	Susan Hayward	Sarah Chaffin
Tabitha Wood	Rebecca Hayward	Rebecca Hayward, Mrs.
Sarah Fuller	Susan Faulkner	Elisabeth Hunt
Lucy Hayward	Mary Faulkner, Mrs.	Mary Faulkner
Betsey Conant	Sarah Wild	Elizabeth Wheeler,
Phineas Wheeler	Silas Hosmer	from Carlisle
Amos Noyes	Jonathan Billings	Stephen Weston
Thomas Lawrence	Charles Tuttle	James Keyes
Stevens Hayward	Jotham Hunt	Joseph Wild

Admitted May 13, 1832

Hepzibah Bright	Eliza Bright	Almira Bright
Sarah Skinner	Sarah Davis	Charlotte Jones
Nancy Shirland	Charlotte Davis	Polly Billings
Mariah Edwards	John Edwards	Dr. Harris Cowdrey

Admitted July 8, 1832

Jerusha Noyes, from	Thankful Harrington	Eunice Conant
Westmoreland, N. H.	*Mary E. Tuttle	Joseph Cowdrey
Lucy Robins	Abraham Conant	
Elizabeth Brooks	Abigail Hayward	

Admitted Sept. 9, 1832

Mary Ann Davis,	Lucretia Blood,	Rachel Hayward,
from Winchendon	from Bolton	from Worcester
Esther Hosmer	Sophia Billings	*Jerusha Robbins
Louisa Osgood	Eunice Brown	

[1] There is a conflict here between Fletcher, who asserts on page 290 that Rev. Woodbury was ordained on March 13, 1832, and the Church Manual printed in 1912, which gives the August date used above.

Admitted Nov. 4, 1832

Clarina Chaffin
Luther Jones
Rebecca Dudley
Simeon Conant
Sarah Parlin
William Cutting

Admitted January 6, 1833

Mary Ann Clough
Rebecca Barker
Daniel Barker
James T. Woodbury, from Bath, N. H.
Timothy Wheeler
Abigail Davis
Ebenezer Davis
Elizabeth Brooks from Charlestown
Maria Conant
Benjamin Hall
Sally Holden
Silas Holden
Augusta Woodbury
Charlotte Handley
Anna Robbins
Asa Pike Dudley

Admitted March 3, 1833

Lucinda Jones
Lucinda Hartwell
Rebecca Billings

Admitted May 5, 1833

Mary Hapgood
Mary Lawrence
Harriet Wetherbee
Susan Hall, from Essex St. Church, Boston
Winthrop Wheeler
Damaris Chapman
Adeline Weston
Roxa Keyes
Simon Hapgood
Franklin Wheeler
Lucy Lawrence
Eunice Weston
Susan Faulkner
Oliver Emerson Thorp
Alden Fuller

Admitted July 7, 1833

Emerson Prescott
Ann M. Parker
Paul Dudley, 2nd.
Elizabeth Blood
Leydia Robbins
Mehitable Wheeler

Admitted Sept. 1, 1833

Simon Fletcher
Hiram Butters
Harriet H. Stowell
Catherine E. Smith
William Jewell
Avery Reed
Sarah Wheeler
Cyrene Fletcher
Betsey Conant
Sarah Ann Wild

Admitted November 3, 1833

Hannah W. Fletcher
Rufus Holden
Cyrus Dole
Silas Jones
Josiah W. Brown
Luther Jones
Widow Mary Brooks
Nabby Hosmer
John Woodbury
Davis Parlin
Rebecca Noyes
Lucindy I. Wheeler
Harriet Reed
Edward Wetherbee
Uriah G. Robbins
Ebenezer Davis, 2nd.
Ephraim Hapgood
Winthrop F. Conant
Emeline Hosmer
Saphia Wetherbee
Susan Hosmer
Luther Conant
Amos Handley, 2nd.
Mary W. Handley
Clarissa Parker
Stephen Weston
Darus Billings
Timothy Heartwell
Nathaniel Hapgood
Abner Hosmer
Rebecca Hapgood
Fidelia Wheeler
Clarissa Fletcher
Samuel K. Cagswell
Thomas F. Noyes
Elisabeth H. Parker
Olive Barker
Lounso A. Mace
Nathaniel S. Adams

Charles Wiley	Moses A. Noyes	Isaac T. Flagg
Henry Fairbanks	Josiah X. Wheeler	Daniel Jones
Luther Heywood	James N. Brown	
John Fletcher	Francis W. Ayers	

Admitted January 30, 1838

Bradley Stone	Nathan Hosmer	Joel Conant
Walter Keyes	Clarissa Stone	Rebecca Hosmer
Mary Hosmer	Dorcas Deeth	
(by letter)	(by letter)	

Note: The names in the foregoing list preceded by an asterisk indicate those who were baptized but not necessarily admitted to church membership.

So dynamic was the leadership of Rev. Woodbury that in 1833 a third meeting house, fifty by forty four feet, was erected on the site of the present building, to be followed by a fourth in 1846, in which he preached for five years before leaving Acton. In its original form this latter edifice was of the typical New England type with a central sharp spire in the center and two entrance doors. The main auditorium occupied the whole second floor. The rostrum and the pulpit were at the far end from the street, and two main aisles led the length of the room from the doors. There were pews on either side of the rostrum facing it. The choir loft and the organ were at the rear of the congregation. The present Ladies Aid Parlor was non existent as of today on the third floor.

The following is a description of the building as found in the church records in Mr. Woodbury's handwriting:

"1847, January 1st. The new meeting house erected on the spot where stood the former one was duly dedicated to Almighty God, Son and Holy Ghost, Dec. 16, 1846, Wednesday at one o'clock P. M. House 75 feet by 50, with a basement story of stone with 82 pews. Cost about $6000, exclusive of the fresco painting of the interior and the cushions, carpets, lamps, clock, communion table and chairs, Bible and hymn books, which all cost $700, and were all absolute gifts to the church and the house, not to be put upon the pews.

"The building Committee were: Dr. J. M. Miles, Samuel Hosmer 2nd., Simon Tuttle, John P. Buttrick, Col. Winthrop E. Faulkner, and they did their duty faithfully and are entitled to the lasting gratitude of the church".

Two phrases in the above may need a bit of explanation to the modern reader. In the reference to the basement it would appear that there were eighty two pews in the basement in addition to those in the main body of the church. This, of course, was not so. The very last phrase signifies that the gifts were absolute and were not to be charged to the pew holders.

In 1867 the pipe organ was installed and in 1875 the parsonage was built by Mr. Moses Taylor for Rev. Franklin P. Wood who was its first occupant.

The building was remodelled to its present form in 1898 during the ministry of Rev. Bernard Copping. The colored glass windows were given by friends of the church, among them the beautiful double front window donated by Hon. William A. Wilde.

In May of 1910 the Evangelical Church in Acton became incorporated under the name of the Evangelical Congregational Church in Acton, Mass., and the old Parish, which had so long carried on the financial matters of the church, was dissolved.

At the meeting held in March of 1909 the town voted to accept the trust fund of three thousand dollars donated by the will of Charlotte L. Goodnow. The stipulation was that each year twenty dollars of the income should be utilized to care for the Goodnow lot in Woodlawn and the remainder be turned over to the treasurer of the Congregational Church at the Centre to be applied toward the cost of preaching

Although the town gets nothing from the fund it does elect trustees and their annual statement is appended to each town report.

A list of the ministers follows:

Rev. James T. Woodbury	Aug. 1832 - June 1852
Rev. Benjamin Dodge	Oct. 1852 - Apr. 1855
Rev. Charles Rockwell	Sept. 1855 - July 1856
Rev. Joseph Garland	Jan. 1857 - Jan. 1859
Rev. Alpha Morton	May 1859 - May 1863
Rev. George W. Coleman	Nov. 1863 - May 1869
Rev. Franklin P. Wood	July 1871 - Dec. 1884
Rev. H. H. Osgood	Nov. 1884 - June 1886
Rev. G. W. Stearns	Sept. 1887 - Mar. 1891
Rev. W. N. Bessey	July 1891 - Jan. 1893
Rev. Bernard Copping	Apr. 1894 - Oct. 1902
Rev. Thomas M. Miles	Apr. 1903 - Jan. 1908
Rev. Edward C. Hayes	June 1908 - May 1913
Rev. Frederick W. Tingley	Nov. 1913 - Sept. 1916
Rev. James Robertson	Jan. 1917 - Dec. 1920
Rev. Russell J. May	Mar. 1921 - Feb. 1924
Rev. Harry E. White	Mar. 1924 - May 1926
Rev. Dwight La Follette	Oct. 1926 - Oct. 1928
Rev. Howard A. Long	Dec. 1928 - Feb. 1932
Rev. Russell J. May	Mar. 1932 - April 1934
Rev. Glenn Douglas	June 1934 - Dec. 1938
Rev. Lynne Townsend	June 1939 - April 1943

Rev. Charles Havice	Aug. 1943 - July 1945
Rev. Gilbert Zimmerman	Dec. 1945 - May 1947
Rev. Donald Yaekle	Oct. 1947 - July 1949
Rev. Howard B. Simms	Oct. 1949 - Oct. 1950
Rev. Eric Grimshaw	Nov. 1951 -

THE BAPTIST CHURCH: Upon the occasion of its centennial celebration in 1946 the Baptist Church published a twenty page history which was compiled by Miss Evelyn A. Knowlton. The following sketch is taken in large part from that brochure.

The Massachusetts citizens of the Baptist faith had been very active in the agitation that led to the separation of the church and state. For some years previous to the organization of the Acton church certain of the local people were communicants in the church at Littleton.

On July 10, 1846 a group which had its focus in West Acton met at the home of Mr. Leonard Pierce for the purpose of establishing a church. Horace Richardson was chosen moderator and James M. Brown clerk. Of this group John Blanchard, Margaret B. Blanchard, Semantha B. Little, Elizabeth D. Blanchard, Hannah F. B. Mace, Matilda Fletcher, Percyveranda Hapgood, Aaron Hosmer, Becca Hosmer, Joel H. Whitcomb, Catherine Wheeler, Heywood Brown, Laura Brown and James K. Brown already had letters of dismission and recommendation from the Baptist church in Littleton. Others present who had sent for letters were Leonard Pierce, and wife and daughter Olive, Eri Huggins and wife, Horace Richardson, Rebecca Hapgood, and Mary Ann Hapgood.

In September the land was bought for the church. The old school house had stood upon the spot until removed to form the ell to the the brick house across the way.

First meeting house dedicated July 19th, 1847.

On March 26, 1848 the congregation was called together by the bell for the first time.

On July 2, 1853 the first meeting house was burned. Presumably the fire was of incendiary origin since on August 14th the town voted a reward of one hundred dollars for evidence leading to the detection of the persons setting the fire.

On January 9, 1853, after six years of service, the first minister Rev. Horace Richardson was released at his own request. He had decided to evangelize in some small way the wild society of California during the most hectic days of the gold rush period.

On September 19, 1854 the second meeting house was dedicated. It had by far the sharpest and the tallest spire of any local church edifice.

In 1868 the church asked to be dismissed from the Boston Association to unite with the Wachusett Association with which it has since been affiliated.

In 1879 Rev. J. R. Haskins was the first to inhabit the newly erected parsonage.

In 1898 extensive alterations were made and during that time services were held in Littlefield's Hall.

In 1934 the tall steeple was adjudged unsafe and the present dome to the belfry was built.

The list of pastors follows:

Rev. Horace Richardson 1846-1853
Rev. W. W. Watson 1853-1860
Rev. Jacob Tuck 1861-1863
Rev. J. V. Ambler (Acting pastor several months)
Rev. Walter Rice 1865-1867
Rev. W. K. Davey 1868-1873
Rev. J. C. Boomer 1874-1878
Rev. J. R. Haskins 1878-1883
Rev. C. L. Rhoades 1883-1888
Rev. Frank A. Heath 1888-1891
Rev. Bryant McLellan 1891-1893
Rev. E. I. Lindh 1893-1895
Rev. Gorham Esterbrook 1896-1905
Rev. David W. Lovett 1905-1911
Rev. Charles L. Pierce 1912-1919
Rev. George L. Michelson 1919-1921
Rev. A. E. Wheeler 1921-1923
Rev. Lockwood (Acting pastor) 7 months
Rev. Fred P. Haggard 1924-1925
Rev. B. Stanley Batstone 1925-1928
Rev. Dr. Wolfe (Acting pastor) 1 year
Rev. Arthur Jeffries 1929-1937
Rev. Arthur H. Wilde 1937-1943
Rev. H. E. Danielson 1944-1948
Rev. David Thompson 1948-1952

THE UNIVERSALISTS: The first Universalist sermons were preached in Acton by Rev. Hosea Ballou (1771-1852) as early as 1814

or 1815.[1] The following data is taken in part from a sermon preached by Rev. I. C. Knowlton at the dedication of the present Universalist meeting house in South Acton in 1878.

On January 19, 1816 the first Universalist Society of Acton was formed, consisting of eleven members. In 1821 and 1822 Rev. Dr. Benjamin Whittemore preached one half of the Sabbaths in Acton in halls, school houses and private residences.

On January 27, 1821 the First Universalist Society of Acton was legally incorporated. It consisted of fifty paying members, two years later of sixty one members, and eventually reached eighty paying members.

On December 17, 1833 a church of thirty nine members was formed as the result of the labors of Rev. Joseph Wright, who, that year, became the pastor of the society.

On October 4, 1834, the Boston Association of Universalists met at Acton. During the next six years the religious services were held in the First Parish Church (the meeting house built in 1807) and were well attended.

In June 1836, Rev. Isaac Brown became the resident minister of the society and continued for three years. In July 1837 he was formally installed as pastor with appropriate services.

About 1850 the Universalist interest at Acton Centre peacefully expired. From that date to 1858 there were no regular services in the town. In 1858 Rev. J. M. Usher preached in both South and West Acton. According to the West Acton records Robinson's Hall (later known as Grand Army Hall) was used as the meeting place. As of April 17, 1859 arrangements are on record whereby until December first Rev. J. M. Usher was to preach four Sundays while the other Sabbaths were to be taken by various laymen, namely Messrs, Bruce, Talbot, Record, Weaser, Shepard, Russ, Prince and Plummer. Rev. Usher served both the West and South Societies for six years and upon his retirement in 1864 Rev. Edwin Davis became pastor of both groups and so continued until April of 1872, being followed by W. W. Harward for three years and Rev. N. P. Smith for one year.

The West and South Societies, although entirely separate, were started at the same time and Rev. Usher was really the founder of both.

In 1861 the South Society moved into Exchange Hall where it wor-

[1] The name Hosea Ballard (Fletcher p. 293) is a misprint. Rev. Hosea Ballou (not to be confused with Hosea Ballou 2nd. who became the first president of Tufts College in 1852) was a sort of patron saint of Universalism and its most prominent and ardent advocate. He preached at the home of Robert Chaffin, now the residence of Mr. Ralph C. Choate, on January 16, 1816. According to data provided by the church records it was at this meeting that the society was organized rather than on the 19th as per Fletcher. Furthermore there were twelve members, not eleven.

shipped for seventeen years. In 1868 the West Society built the meeting house which served it until 1925 at which time it ceased to function as a place of worship and was, through the generosity of Mr. Arthur F. Blanchard, Mr. George C. Wright, and Mr. George V. Mead, purchased outright and donated to the West Acton Women's Club.

In October of 1875 Rev. I. C. Knowlton assumed charge of the two societies and continued until 1892.

According to Fletcher a society of thirty members was organized at West Acton on May 21, 1876. Thereafter for two generations the names associated with the families of Oliver and Adelbert Mead, F. C. Nash, George Wright, Harriet Gardner, Capt. Frank Whitcomb, Oscar Preston, Hanson Littlefield, Clark and Charles Durkee, Phineas Wetherbee, Henry Haynes, and Fred and Almon Gilmore were prominent in the Universalist church activities.

The present Universalist meeting house in South Acton was built by George Wood of Concord and dedicated Frebruary 21, 1878. Mr. J. K. W. Wetherbee was chairman of the building committee and Mr. James Tuttle chairman of the trustees of the church. Rev. I. C. Knowlton preached the dedicatory sermon.

The original membership is given below:

Mr. & Mrs. J. Warren Tuttle	Mr. & Mrs. J. K. W. Wetherbee
Mr. & Mrs. James Tuttle	Mr. & Mrs. Reuben Hayward
Mrs. E. H. Wheeler	Mrs. Evelina Shapley
Mrs. E. Josephine Conant	Mrs. Marthetta Taylor
Mrs. Mary Wheeler	Mrs. Harrietta Harris
Mrs. Charlotte A. Tuttle	Mrs. Charlotte Ames
Mrs. Althea Houston	Miss Jennie Gates
Mr. & Mrs. Hiram Hapgood	Mr. & Mrs. Albert Moulton

The Society was known as the South Acton Christian Church.

One unique feature of the building was that the church kitchen in the basement had access to a valuable open spring which proved most useful until the introduction of town water.

The present heavy bell was put into place with proper ceremonies in May of 1908.

In 1948 the original altar and rail that were used in Exchange Hall when the services were held there before the building of the church were rediscovered in the Exchange Hall attic by Otis Reed. Their existence had been forgotten. They have been refurbished and put into the present church and add a great deal to the furnishings.

The Young Peoples Christian Union was organized April 19, 1891.

The list of pastors following Rev. I. C. Knowlton is given below.

Rev. H. M. Smith 1892 - 1895

Rev. William F. Dusseault	1895 - 1902
Rev. Frank Rice	1902 - 1907
Rev. Sidney J. Willis	1907 - 1914
Rev. Luther Morris	1914 - 1918
Rev. Hugo Perdelwitz	1919 - 1920
Rev. Charles Paddock	1921 - 1923
Rev. Charles Haney	1924 - 1925
Rev. Andrew J. Torsleff	1925 - 1931
Rev. George Wood	1931 - 1833
Rev. Ernest Carritt	1833 - 1936
Rev. Norman Kellett	1936 - 1938
Rev. O. S. Milburn	1938 - 1940
Rev. F. Milner Dunn	1940 - 1943
Rev. Gordon MacKeeman	1944 - 1944
Rev. Kieth Munson	1945 - 1946
Rev. Gordon Crook	1946 - 1948
Rev. Carl Hempel	1949 - 1952
Rev. Edwin Burlingame	1952 -

SOUTH ACTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH: The South Acton Congregational Church is the outgrowth of a movement begun in 1876.

Rev. F. P. Wood, at the time pastor of the Center Congregational Church, brought the South community to the attention of the Middlesex conference of churches and the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society. Under their auspices religious services with preaching was established in June of 1876.

The original place of worship was a hall in Dwight's Block. On June 1, 1877 the services were transferred to the chapel room in the school building where they continued to be held until the completion of the present house of worship in 1892.

For five years, until August 1881, the community had the services of Rev. N. Thompson who shared his ministry with the church in Boxboro. Mr. Thompson's successors were the Rev. William Leonard and Rev. George Dustan, each of whom served two years.

At the termination of Mr. Dustan's pastorate the church voted to sever connections with the conference and the missionary society and endeavor to be self supporting.

Arrangements were made with the Rev. C. L. Rhoades, pastor of the Baptist Church in West Acton, to officiate for the South Acton church. This plan was continued for two additional years with Rev. Frank Heath, successor to Mr. Rhoades.

At a meeting held April 4, 1890 it was voted to return to the Congregational order and Rev. F. P. Wood filled the pulpit for a year.

On April 14, 1891 it was voted to unite with the Centre Church and under this regime Rev. Wiliam N. Bessey officiated for both parishes until 1893.

Since that time the following pastors have been active:

1893 - 1900	Rev. W. R. Buxton
1901 - 1904	Rev. E. G. Smith and Rev. J. T. McBean
1904 - 1907	Rev. Arthur B. Peebles
1907 - 1911	Rev. Merrit A. Farren
1911 - 1914	Rev. Edgar Crossland
1915 - 1916	Rev. Raymond Fitz
1916 - 1932	Rev. Ralph A. Barker
1933 - 1935	Rev. Arthur E. Beckett
1935 - 1939	Mr. Amel W. Whitmer
1939 - 1946	Rev. Harry B. Roberts

During World War II the Universalist and Congregational churches met together to conserve fuel, their respective ministers sharing the work. This plan was discontinued in January of 1949 and the Congregational Church was served by Rev. Marshall Jenkins as interim minister.

In May of 1949 when the minister at the Center church resigned it was voted to form a "yoke parish" so the two churches engaged Rev. Ben Simms. Upon his resignation in October of 1950 the South church decided to discontinue the arrangement and Mr. William Kopelke came to preach.

At present the pulpit is being filled by two Boston University students, Mr. Gilbert Bennet and Mr. Carl Douglas, who share the work.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH: For some years before 1900 the mass was celebrated, at first once a month, and later weekly, in Grand Army Hall at West Acton. The present church building was erected under the direction of Rev. Walter J. Brown, who was then pastor in the Maynard parish, of which Acton was then a mission. The church was dedicated Sept. 21, 1913 as St. Elizabeth of Hungary. St. Elizabeth of Hungary was made a parish in 1945. The parish includes all of the town of Acton. The resident pastors have been Rev. Stephen Grover Murray, Rev. Francis C. Eagan and the present incumbent Rev. John Amos York. The basement of the church is used as a parish hall.

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS: Within the last two years a small group of Quakers has been in the habit of holding services in the rooms of Acton Centre Women's Club.

APPENDIX XV

A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE SERVICES OF ACTON MEN IN THE CIVIL WAR SUBSEQUENT TO THE RETURN OF THE 6TH REGIMENT AS OUTLINED IN A MEMORIAL DAY ADDRESS TO THE GRAND ARMY POST BY MR. LUTHER CONANT

Shortly after the return of the Sixth Regiment Colonel Jones commenced to recruit a regiment of three years men to be numbered the Sixth Massachusetts. It was not until the ranks were full and it was nearly ready to leave for the seat of war that Governor Andrew decided to retain the old Sixth as a militia regiment, to be called upon in cases of special urgency.

The new regiment was consequently numbered the Twenty Sixth. Most of the officers and many of the men of the old Sixth had enlisted for three years and were enrolled in the Twenty Sixth. Captain Tuttle's health not permitting his to return to the war, William H. Chapman, lieutenant of Company E, old Sixth, became captain of Company E, Twenty Sixth, and twenty members of the old company enlisted in the new one. This regiment was mustered into the service of the United States on October 18, 1861, and left the state on November 21st, same year, taking passage on the steamship "Constitution" to Ship Island, on the coast of Louisiana, and remained at Ship Island for about four months.

At that time the fleet under Commodores Farragut and Porter, bombarded Forts St. Philip and Jackson, on the Mississippi River, and the Twenty Sixth Regiment moved to the rear of the forts in readiness for assault, but the surrender of the forts voided the necessity of an attack and saved many valuable lives.

After the surrender the regiment garrisoned the forts for about four months and then was ordered to New Orleans for provost duty. It remained there about a year, then started with General Banks on the expedition up the Red River as far as Opelousas; then ordered back to New Iberia, where about three fourths of the company reenlisted, and were given a furlough, commencing April 4, 1864, of one month, to visit their friends at home. Upon the expiration of the furlough the regiment was ordered to return to New Orleans, La. which journey was made on the steamship "Cahawha" and arrived at its destination May 20th.

After occupying Carrollton[1] and Morganza, it returned to New Orleans, and on July 11th embarked on the steamer "Charles Thomas" for Bermuda Hundred, Virginia, which place was reached the 21st of

[1] Carrollton is now absorbed within the city limits of New Orleans.

July. On the 28th the regiment marched to Deep Bottom, Va. where considerable picket firing took place, but no casualties happened. Subsequently the regiment was ordered to Washington, D. C. and then marched through a portion of Maryland to the valley of the Shenandoah River, reaching Winchester on the morning of the battle of September 19, 1864. The battle commenced about ten o' clock in the forenoon and lasted until five P. M., when the enemy retreated. The regiment, being in the lead, advanced too far without proper support, and found itself with the enemy not only in front, but on both flanks, and, being thus exposed to a severe cross fire, suffered severely, Company E. having seven men killed or mortally wounded. Of the four months men who went into battle, at its close only twenty seven were fit for duty. The battle of Fisher's Hill took place three days later.

On October 18th the three years term of service of that portion of the regiment that did not enlist having expired, the regiment was consolidated into a battalion of five companies by Special Order No. 64, and those whose term of enlistment had expired were separated from their comrades who had re-enlisted. In the battle the following day, let it be said to the credit of many of those discharged men, though under no obligation to do so, they gallantly again entered the ranks, fought all day and helped to change a temporary defeat into a glorious victory.

I am sorry to say that this voluntary act of patriotism cost some of these noble men their lives. Corporal Loker tells me that after the fight he helped to bury two men killed in action whose term of service had expired before the battle.

On October 19th the rebel army surprised the Union troops at Cedar Creek, driving them back four miles in confusion. This was the scene of Sheridan's famous ride from "Winchester, twenty miles away," though, as a matter of fact, the Union troops had made a stand before his arrival. The remarks he made to his men greatly inspirited them, though it is not probable that these remarks will ever take a place in polite literature.

The results of the battle of Cedar Creek were the capture of nearly all of the rebel baggage-train and field artillery, and the complete dispersion of Early's forces. The battalion remained at Winchester during the winter, was ordered to Washington May 2nd, and one month later was sent to Savannah, Ga., where it remained until August 26, 1865, when the battalion was mustered out of service; left Savannah September 12th, and reached Boston September 18th; were sent to Gallup's Island for final payment, and reached Acton the evening of October 21, 1865, after an absence of four years and three days.

In the narrative of Company E, Twenty Sixth Regiment, I stated

that Governor Andrew decided to retain the Sixth as a militia regiment to answer sudden calls. In response to such a call it left the state August 31, 1862, to serve for nine months under Colonel Allen S. Follansbee, of Lowell. Company E, of Acton, was officered as follows: Aaron C. Handley, captain; Aaron S. Fletcher and George W. Rand, lieutenants; Dr. Isaiah Hutchins, hospital steward for the regiment.

Captain Handley had commanded the Davis Guards some years before the war. His grandfather had served in the Revolutionary War and his father did military duty in the War of 1812.

The regiment was ordered to Suffolk, Va., near Fortress Monroe. It assisted in the construction of Forts Nansemond and McLellan. The regiment was detailed for guard duty in the forts, afterwards for scouting duty and destroying rebel railroads, among which were the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad and the Seaboard and Roanoke.

The regiment took part in several battles and skirmishes. Among these may be mentioned the Deserted House, Carrsville, and Ludlow Lawrence's home. In these actions the Sixth had twenty seven men killed and wounded. There were no casualties in the Acton company, though that company lost three men by disease. The regiment was mustered out June 3, 1863.

The services of the Sixth were required for the third and last time during the war, for a term of enlistment of one hundred days, commencing July 18, 1864.

Colonel Follansbee again led the regiment, and Co. E. of Acton was under the following officers: Frank H. Whitcomb, who was orderly sergeant during the nine months' term of service in 1861 and 1863, was captain, with George W. Knight and Isaiah Hutchins as lieutenants. The regiment was ordered to proceed to Washington and marched to Arlington Heights and performed fatigue duty in front of Fort Stevens for two or three weeks. This fatigue duty consisted of leveling the ground and felling trees to give greater range and efficiency to the great guns of the fort. At this time it was ordered to garrison Fort Delaware and guard the rebel prisoners in the fort. After useful but uneventful term of service it was mustered out October 27th and returned home.

Of the one hundred men in Captain Whitcomb's company twenty nine were from Acton. No casualties or deaths occurred during this enlistment.

The official military record of the town of Acton records two hundred and fifteen men as sent to the army, including twenty commissioned officers. The adjutant-general's report for 1865 states that at the close of the war she had answered all calls required to fill her quota and had a surplus of thirty men to her credit. The number of commissioned officers was exceptionally large. No Acton born soldier

credited to her quota deserted or failed to receive an honorable discharge.

The recruiting committee of the town consisted of the selectmen; James E. Billings, J. K. W. Wetherbee and Jonas K. Putney, with an assistant committee of Daniel Wetherbee, Capt. Aaron C. Handley, and Varnum Mead.

Four brothers enlisted from one family, sons of Mrs. Abram Handley, a widow. Though one of the brothers (Frank) died early in the war, and another (George) was discharged for disability, their combined terms of service exceeded ten years.

Mr. Wheeler's three sons (Addison, Lincoln, Warren) enlisted on September 7th and 9th, 1861. In six other cases two brothers were in ranks together and in one case father and son, William and William B. Reed, were in service at the same time.

Luke Smith was credited three times to the quota of the town. His father, Solomon Smith, marched over the same road under Captain Isaac Davis to the Old North Bridge that his son, Luke, followed in part under Captain Daniel Tuttle eighty four years later. Mr. Smith was the oldest soldier credited to Acton's quota, having at his last enlistment (for one hundred days) in 1864 reached the age of more than fifty years.

Thomas Kinsley, Jr., was the youngest recruit, being but fifteen years and two months at the time of his enlistment. He died in Washington D. C. at the age of eighteen (reputedly as the result of confinement in Libby prison).[1]

[1] A contradiction exists here since the age of Thomas Kinsley was 15 years, 10 months, 16 days at the time of his death according to his gravestone in Woodlawn Cemetery.

APPENDIX XVI

ACTON MEN WHO DIED IN THE SERVICE OF THE UNION ARMY IN THE CIVIL WAR

Cyrus E. Barker, enlisted July 1861, in Co. H. 13th Mass. Reg.; discharged Jan. 1863 for disability; afterwards enlisted in Co. C, 59th Mass. Reg. He was at the battle of Weldon Railroad, was taken prisoner and after seven months exchanged; died at Annapolis, Md., April 1865, aged 22.

Frank J. Barker, enlisted in Co. C, 118th Illinois Reg., August 1862, died at Milliken's Bend, La. April, 1863, aged 19.

Eben Barker, enlisted in Co. F, 50th Illinois Reg., August 1861, died at Quincey, Ill., January 1862, aged 22.

Luke Bowers, enlisted August 1862 in Co. E, 33rd Mass Reg.; died of wounds May 1, 1864, at Resaca, Georgia.

Albert Conant, enlisted Dec. 1861 in Co. E. 30th Mass. Reg. died at sea Jan. 1864 on the way home, aged 26.

Elbridge Conant, enlisted August 18, 1862 in Co. E, 6th Mass Reg.; died Feb. 1863 at Suffolk, Va., aged 22.

Eugene Hall, enlisted Feb. 1864 in Co. E. 26th Mass. Reg; killed Sept. 1864 at Winchester, Va.

Frank Handley, enlisted Sept. 4, 1861 in Co. E, 26th Mass. Reg., died July 1862 at Fort St. Philip near New Orleans, La., aged 22.

James P. Hanscom, enlisted May 1861 in Co. E. 1st Minnesota Reg.; died Nov. 1862 at Portsmouth Grove, R. I.

Samuel C. Hanscom, enlisted Dec. 1862 in Co. A, 2nd Mass. Cavalry; killed July 1864 at Aldie, Va.

John S. Harris, enlisted June 1861 in Co. F, 11th Mass. Reg.; killed May 1863 at Chancellorsville, Va., aged 28.

Augustus W. Hosmer, enlisted Sept. 1861 in 26th Mass. Reg., musician, died November 1861 at Acton, aged 27.

Eri Huggins, enlisted Sept. 8, 1861 in Co. A, 26th Mass. Reg., died Oct. 1863 at New Orleans, La. Also listed in vital records as Eri Huggins. aged 46.

John A. Howard, enlisted August 1862 in Co. E. 26th Mass. Reg.; died Dec. 1863 at New Orleans, La. aged 32.

Francis Kinsley, enlisted Sept. 1861 in Co. E 26th Mass. Reg. died April 1864 at Acton as result of starvation at Libby Prison, aged 22.

Thomas Kinsley, enlisted Feb. 1864 in Co E. 26th Mass. Reg.; died Nov. 10, 1864 at Washington D. C., aged 18. This is in conflict with his gravestone which states him to have been 15 yrs, 10 months, 16 days.

George Warren Knight, enlisted Oct. 1862 in Co. E. 53rd Mass. Reg.; died April 1863 at New Orleans, La., aged 28.

Henry W. Lazell, enlisted Sept. 1861 in Co. E. 26th Mass. Reg.; died Nov. 1862 at New Orleans, aged 20.

James R. Lentell, enlisted Sept. 5, 1861 in Co. E. 26th Mass. Reg; died Nov. 1862 at New Orleans, aged 19.

William H. Loker, enlisted Sept. 7, 1861 in Co. E. 26th Mass. Reg.; died April 1863 at Acton, aged 24.

Daniel A. Lovering, enlisted August 1862 in Co. H, 13th Mass. Reg.; killed June 1864 at Cold Harbor.

Matthew McKinney, enlisted Aug. 1863 in Co. E, 26th Mass. Reg.; died Sept. 1863 at Berwick City, La.

Marivan Miner, enlisted Aug. 1862 in Co. I, 26th Mass. Reg.; died Feb. 1863 at New Orleans, La.

William B. Reed, enlisted Aug. 1862 in Co. E., 26th Mass. Reg.; died Jan. 1864 at Franklin, La.

Luke Robbins, enlisted in Boston, June 1864 as seaman for two years; served on board the "Ohio" and the "Seminole"; was killed on the Seminole at Galveston, Texas, May 1865, aged 28.

James M. Wright,enlisted Nov. 1861 in Co. B, 32nd Mass. Reg.; died Sept. 1862 at Philadelphia, age 35.

Warren R. Wheeler, enlisted Sept. 9, 1861 in Co. E., 26th Mass Reg.; died July 1862 at Fort St. Philip near New Orleans, La., age 22.

John H. P. White, enlisted Sept. 2, 1861 in Co. E., 26th Mass. Reg.; died July 1863 at New Orleans, La. age 46.

Samuel E. Wilson, who actually survived the war and whose name appears in that list enlisted in 1864 in Co. K, 7th California Reg., and died in Feb. 1866 at Fort Yuma, Cal.

APPENDIX XVII

ACTON MEN LISTED ON THE TABLET AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE MEMORIAL LIBRARY AS HAVING SERVED IN THE UNION ARMY AND SURVIVED THE CIVIL WAR.

(Where possible the date of enlistment, occupation, and age at enlistment is given)

Col. William H. Chapman	farmer	8/12/61	32
Capt. Aaron C. Handley	butcher	8/25/62	39
Capt. Daniel Tuttle	farmer	4/16/61	47
Capt. Frank H. Whitcomb	milkman	8/25/62	24
Lt. Silas Blodgett	blacksmith		born 1836
Lt. Henry Brown	clerk	8/12/62	19
Lt. Aaron Fletcher	farmer	11/ 1/61	20
Lt. Elias Haynes	carpenter	9/ 2/61	27
Lt. Isaiah Hutchins	physician	8/25/62	32
Lt. George W. Knights	wheelwright	4/16/61	26
Lt. James Moulton	farmer	9/ 4/61	21
Lt. George Rand	carpenter	4/16/61	38
Lt. William Wood	painter	9/10/61	30
Privates:			
Frank Ames	accountant		
George T. Ames	coffee importer		
George E. Barker	farmer		
Charles H. Blood			
George F. Blood			
John F. Blood	farmer	9/ 6/61	26
William H. Boss			
Henry L. Bray			
Daniel R. Briggs	tinsmith	9/25/61	45
Charles A. Brooks	farmer	9/ 4/61	21
Samuel R. Burroughs	farmer	9/24/61	18
Hiram Butters	farmer		
Patrick Callahan			
George F. Campbell		4/16/61	22
Waldo Chaplin	livery		
William Chaplin, Jr.	carpenter	6/ 8/64	24
William D. Clark	blacksmith	6/ 2/63	21
J. Sherman Conant			
Robert C. Conant	farmer		
Simon T. Conant	farmer		born 1837
John Conway	laborer		
George B. Cram[1]	farmer	9/ 2/61	20
John B. Cram[1]	farmer	9/ 2/61	20
Waldo G. Dunn	shoemaker		born 1842
Oscar Dwelley			
Abel Farrar	farmer	8/25/62	24
Daniel Farrar	blacksmith	8/25/62	18

[1] Fletcher p. 289 and the Acton Vital Records p. 31 are in conflict as to spelling. Fletcher gives Cran.

Winthrop E. Faulkner	farmer		
James W. Fiske	bootmaker	10/ 9/61	26
John W. Fitzpatrick	spinner	8/12/62	34
Aaron J. Fletcher	farmer	11/ 1/61	20
Charles W. Fletcher			
Ephraim B. Forbush	hotel prop.		
Channey U. Fuller	farmer		
Meldon S. Giles			
Henry Gilson			
Nathan Goss	stone cutter	9/ 2/61	39
William B. Gray	shoemaker	9/ 2/61	18
William H. Gray	trader	8/28/61	40
Delette H. Hall	farmer	9/19/61	18
Abram Handley	farmer	9/ 4/61	18
Charles Handley	laborer		
George Handley	farmer	9/14/61	32
William S. Handley	farmer	9/ 4/61	23
Charles A. Hanscom	farmer		
Henry Hapgood	farmer		born 1842
Marshall Hapgood	farmer		
Francis E. Harris[1]	carpenter	6/ 8/64	21
Forestus D. K. Hoar	mason	6/ 8/64	33
Walter O. Holden	gen'l laborer		
Gilman S. Hosmer	farmer	8/29/61	21
Eri Huggins[2]	farmer	9/ 8/61	44
Judson A. Huggins	farmer	9/ 8/61	17
Sylvanus Hunt	teamster	6/ 9/63	23
Loring M. Jackson			
Mortimer Johnson			
Charles Jones			born 1839
Edwin A. Jones	musician	8/ 5/61	23
George Jones			born 1840
George A. Jones			
Richard Kinsley	stone mason		
Jonathan W. Loker	shoemaker	9/ 7/61	22
Emory D. Lothrop	machinist		
Lewis J. Masters			
William Morrill	shoe cutter	8/25/62	30
Charles Morse	shoemaker	9/ 4/61	27
Albert Moulton	farmer		
Charles H. Moulton	farmer		
Augustus P. Newton			
George B. Parker	miller		born 1837
Henry D. Parlin	laborer		born 1836
George E. Peck	farmer	6/18/63	21
George N. Pierce			
George M. Pike	shoemaker	9/2I/61	27
Michael Powers	farmer	9/27/61	22
Oscar E. Preston	teamster	6/ 8/64	20
John Putnam	machinist	9/ 2/61	27

[1] Another Francis E. Harris, a farmer, enlisted 8/25/62 aged 18.
[2] Fletcher on page 289, colm. 1 has this name as Eri Huggins which is in conflict with the vital records, page 68.

William Reed	farmer		
Elbridge Robbins	trader		born 1839
Joseph N. Robbins			born 1834
Levi H. Robbins	farmer		born 1839
Luke J. Robbins	carpenter		born 1836
Varnum F. Robbins	fireman		born 1840
Albert Rouillard			
Andrew J. Sawyer	shoemaker	8/25/62	30
Dennis Sheehan	farmer	9/ 9/61	34
Emory A Simonds			
George H. Simpson	clerk	6/29/61	21
Benjamin Skinner	shoemaker	8/12/62	37
George D. Smith			
Luke Simth[1]	stone cutter	4/16/61	48
Silas M. Stetson			
Edwin B. Taft	shoemaker	8/12/62	25
Edwin C. Tarbell	farmer	9/ 2/61	25
Daniel G. Taylor			
James Wayne			
John Wayne	farmer	8/31/61	22
Robert Wayne	carpenter		born 1842
Hiram W. Wetherbee			
Addison B. Wheeler	farmer	9/ 9/61	22
Everett Wheeler	farmer	9/ 9/61	18
Lincoln E. Wheeler	farmer	9/ 7/61	18
William F. B. Whitney	farmer	9/ 2/61	19
Samuel E. Wilson			
Eben F. Wood			
James H. Wood	farmer	9/ 2/61	22
Charles H. Young			

[1] Luke Smith, born Feb. 22, 1813 was one of those rare individuals who, being a soldier in the Union Army, could boast that his father fought in the Revolution. Solomon Smith, a member of Davis' company at Concord Fight at age 22 begat a son Luke when he was 60. He died in 1837 at age 84. Luke Smith died in 1899 at the age of 86.

APPENDIX XVIII

MEN NOT OF ACTON WHO BECAUSE OF THE TOWN BOUNTY OR OTHER REASONS ENLISTED TO THE CREDIT OF THE TOWN IN THE CIVIL WAR.

Allen, George				
Allen, Nathaniel				
Battles, Edward L.	farmer		8/12/62	33
Beckwith, Herbert E.	clerk		11/11/63	
Brant, James	farmer	Boxborough	9/ 4/61	45
Brunos, Alfred	pianist	Boston	11/25/64	28
Carroll, John	laborer	St. Jonns N B.	11/13/63	29
Casey, Richard		New Orleans	12/ 2/62	20
Clark, John	blacksmith	Canada	6/ 2/63	21
Cunningham, Martin	laborer	Ireland	6/20/63	22
Davidson, Edward A.				born 1846
Desmond, George	shoemaker	Providence R. I.	3/26/63	21
Donovan, John	laborer		11/17/63	20
Fairgrieves, Charles	laborer	Boston	12/29/64	21
Farley, John	clerk	Framingham	9/ 9/61	18
Fasser, Joseph	gas fitter	Boston	11/23/64	28
Fink, John C.				born 1833
Flanigan, John	sailor	Ireland	6/20/63	23
Flood, George			9/ 4/61	22
Forrest, John	farmer	Billerica	9/ 6/61	21
Harris, Francis E.	grocer	Boston	11/25/64	44
Hart, Arthur	seaman	Halifax, N. S.	11/16/63	24
Henderson, Oliver	cotton spinner	Boughlin, Me.	5/15/61	19
Hepperon, James		Saco, Me.	5/13/61	40
Herring, William	machinist	Lawrence, Mass.	11/ 6/63	21
Hurley, Patrick	machinist	Ireland	6/22/63	22
Jeffrey, James		New Orleans	2/27/63	44
Jenkins, Oscar W.		New Orleans	3/25/63	39
Johnson, Chester			8/25/62	18
Lamphere, Albion J.	farmer	Chelmsford	10/14/61	21
Luby, Daniel	machinist	Boston	12/29/64	19
McCann, John	farmer	Woonsocket, R. I.	11/ 6/63	19
McClearn, Richard	seaman	Marblehead	11/25/64	22
McDonald, Robert	painter	Boston	11/25/64	21
McEachran, John	seaman	Marblehead	11/25/64	24
McMullen, Terry	laborer	Boston	11/25/64	18
Meagher,, John	laborer		11/12/61	24
Merrow, Thomas	farmer		6/26/61	22
Miller, Paul	clerk	Boston	11/25/64	34
Moore, Patrick	farmer	Littleton Mass.	9/ 7/61	28
Munroe, Harry	hack driver	Chicago, Ill.	11/16/63	21
Nelson, Darius	operative	Littleton, Mass.	9/ 5/61	20
Newcomb, Joseph	clerk	Boston	1/16/65	21
Nillson, Ola	sailor	Stockholm, Sweden	11/18/63	21
Parker, C. W.				born 1838

Pike, William E.	farmer		9/21/61	22
Porter, Charles P.			5/13/61	27
Roselle, Henry		New Orleans	5/ 5/63	18
Sanborn, Henry	shipper		4/18/61	22
Severance, Augustus			2/17/62	born 1822
Schafer, George A.		New Orleans	2/11/63	26
Sheehan, Theobald	seaman		11/23/63	21
Sheehan, Timothy	farmer		10/29/61	22
Smith, James B.				born 1821
Stromier, Frederick		New Orleans	8/25/62	42
Sullivan, Harry B.	laborer	Portland, Me.	11/26/64	23
Tufts, Robert J.	laborer	Calais, Me.	6/18/61	22
Wheeler, Mason	farmer	Concord, Mass.	9/ 9/61	22
Whitman, John			9/ 2/61	44
Willard, Henry L.				born 1837
Wilson, William	cook		11/13/63	31
Wood, Isaac O.	hosteler	Providence, R. I.	11/28/64	39
Wright, James M.				born 1827
Wright, Thomas		New Orleans	3/21/63	22

APPENDIX XIX

MUSTER ROLL OF COMPANY "E", 6TH MASSACHUSETTS REGIMENT

(This was Capt. Daniel Tuttle's company, known as the Davis Guards which responded to Lincoln's call for volunteers in April 1861 and served three months)

Capt. Daniel Tuttle, Acton
1st Lt. William H. Chapman, Acton
2nd Lt. George W. Rand, Acton
3rd Lt. Silas P. Blodgett, Acton
4th Lt. Aaron L. Fletcher, Acton
Sgt. Luke Smith, Acton
Sgt. George W. Knight, Acton
Sgt. Henry W. Wilder, Stow
Sgt. Granville W. Wilder, Stow
Cpl. Charles Jones, Acton
Cpl. John F. Blood, Jr., Acton
Cpl. Luke J. Robbins, Acton
Cpl. Levi Robbins, Acton
Mus. George F. Campbell, Acton
Pvt. George Blood, Acton
Pvt. John Brown, Stow
Pvt. Henry L. Bray, Acton
Pvt. Charles Brooks, Acton
Pvt. Edward D. Battles, Littleton
Pvt. James L. Durant, Littleton
Pvt. Aaron J. Fletcher, Acton
Pvt. Abel Farran, Acton
Pvt. Henry Gilson, Acton
Pvt. Nathan Goss, Acton
Pvt. William H. Gray, Acton
Pvt. Gilman S. Hosmer, Acton
Pvt. William S. Handley, Acton
Pvt. Charles Handley, Acton
Pvt. George Jones, Acton
Pvt. Waldo Littlefield, Boxborough
Pvt. Henry W. Lazell, Acton
Pvt. James Moulton, Acton
Pvt. Charles Morse, Acton
Pvt. John Putnam, Acton

Pvt.	Varnum F. Robbins, Acton
Pvt.	William Reed, Acton
Pvt.	William B. Reed, Acton
Pvt.	Charles W. Reed, Littleton
Pvt.	George A. Reed, Littleton
Pvt.	Ephraim Smith, Acton
Pvt.	Andrew J. Sawyer, Acton
Pvt.	Edwin Tarbell, Acton
Pvt.	John Whitney, Quincy
Pvt.	William F. B. Whitney, Acton
Pvt.	Eben F. Wood, Acton
Pvt.	Samuel Wilson, Acton
Pvt.	Hiram Wheeler, Acton
Pvt.	John Wayne, Acton
Pvt.	John H. P. White, Acton

As submitted from the Adjutant General's Office, State House, Boston.

Note: The name of Abel Farran is an error. The name should be Abel Farrar. He lived in the house now owned by Mr. Edward Bursaw and was known by the town in general to have been in Tuttle's Company.

APPENDIX XX

MUSTER ROLL OF COMPANY "E" 6TH MASSACHUSETTS REGIMENT; NINE MONTHS MEN.

(After its initial participation in the war the 6th. was reserved by Governor Andrew as a militia regiment to answer sudden calls. In that capacity it left the state August 31, 1862 for nine months service under Colonel Allen S. Follansbee of Lowell.)

Capt. Aaron C. Handley
1st. Lt. Aaron S. Fletcher
2nd. Lt. George W. Rand
Sgt. George W. Knights
Sgt. Andrew F. Sawyer
Sgt. Frank H. Whitcomb
Sgt. Levi H. Robbins
Sgt. F. H. Goodwin
Corp. Isaiah H. Hutchins (Regimental hospital steward)
Corp. William Morrill
Corp. Francis E. Harris
Corp. Abel Farrar
Corp. Joseph N. Robbins
Corp. Varnum F. Robbins
Corp. George Sawyer
Corp. Samuel G. Brown
Musician, Henry L. Bray
Musician, William Allen
George T. Ames
Charles Blood
Hiram Butters
Elbridge Conant
Marcus Conant
William Chaplin
William D. Clark
Oscar Dwelley
Francis Dutton
Edwin Dwinels
Solomon Davis
Albert Dyer
Charles Fletcher
Chauncey U. Fuller
Charles Franklin
Daniel H. Farrar
John Griffin
Forestus D. K. Hoar
Eugene Hall
Henry Hapgood
Charles H. Holton
John S. Hartwell
Marshal Hapgood
John L. Hill
Walter Holden
John Hancock
William F. Hale
George Jones
Charles Jefts
John M. Kidder
George W. Knowlton
Albert Moulton
Joseph Morrin
Lewis J. Marsters
Augustus Newton
William H. T. Nichols
George N. Pierce
John H. Pollard
Oscar Preston
George B. Parker
William Reed
Albert W. Robbins
Kendall J. Rand
William F. Stevens

Engagements:

Nov. 18, 1862, Ludlow Lawrence's Plantation on the Blackwater.

Dec. 12, 1862, Joiner's Ford on the Blackwater

Jan. 30, 1863, Deserted House.

April 11, 1863, Began the siege of Suffolk

Mustered out June 3, 1863.

APPENDIX XXI

LIST OF NAMES INSCRIBED ON THE MEMORIAL PLAQUE FOR WORLD WAR I OPPOSITE THE DAVIS MONUMENT ON ACTON COMMON

Allsopp, Ernest E.
Bayeur, Henry A.
Benere, Donatus W.
Berry, Ernest
Billings, Howard J.
Blanchard, Webster S.
Bresth, Alexander
Bresth, Harold S.
Briggs, George H.
Briggs, Jesse A.
Burke, Edward L.
Burke, Henry B.
Campbell, D. Norman
Cheney, Robert B.
Christiansen, Arthur M.
Christie, Robert E.
Clark, Harry J.
Clark, Orma Lawrence
Clayton, John
Coolidge, Harold B.
Coughlin, John
Coughlin, Mary E.
Coughlin, William C.
Cram, Lowell H.
Currier, Donald H.
Currier, Louis W.
Dane, Stephen H.
Daniels, Howard B.
Davis, John
Durkee, Raymond F.
Emerson, Leon W.
Evans, Albert W.
Fairbanks, J. Madison
Farrar, Raymond F.
Flagg, Carrol H.
Flagg, Harland W.
Foley, David J.
Foley, Michael
Foley, Thomas
Forbes, Crandall W.
Freeman, Richard D.
Frost, Alan B.
Frost, Lillian E.
Gallagher, Thomas C.
Gallant, Joseph
Gallant, Raymond A.
Gates, Ralph E.
Giamone, Frank R.
Gilmore, Walter F.
Goding, Arthur T.
Gould, Glenn C.
Greenough, Frank E.
Hall, H. Wesley
Harris, Alfred B.
Hayes, Raymond E.
Hayes, William T.
Hayward, George K.
Heath, Charles H.
Hettinger, Harry
Hoar, Burton H.
Hoar, Carl S.
Hodgen, Hugh
Huntoon, William
Hurley, James J.
Kenney, John
Klein, Philip E.
Lawrence, Harland B.
Leveroni, Louis F.
Lowden, Theron A.
McAllister, Frederic T.
McAllister, Norman F.
McCarthy, Frank A.
McClinathan, Walter H.
McWayne, John

Mekkelsen, Soren M.
Merriam, Herbert W.
Millan, John
Nagle, Frederick W.
Newsham, Thomas
Newsham, William
Nichols, Orla E.
Nims, Buchanan
Nims, Pliny
Olsen, Oscar
O'Connor, William
Pendergast, Edward
Quimby, Howard
Quinlan, James
Quinlan, Robert
Randall, R. Earl
Reed, Everett
Reed, G. Howard
Richardson, Charles E. S.
Richardson, Harold M.
Roche, Leo B.
Sawyer, Benjamin H.
Sawyer, Philip D.
Shaw, Frederick K.
Sisson, John P.
Smiley, Charles D.
Smiley, William E.
Sylvestre, Charles D.
Tuttle, Howard K.
Wetherbee, Lyman M.
West, Charles S.
Whitcomb, Ernest L.
White, Richard P.
Willis, Nelson B.
Womboldt, Hugh E.
Woodward, Frank H.
Wright, Raymond E.

Of this group Howard Quimby died in France while awaiting transportation back to the United States.

APPENDIX XXII

ACTON CITIZENS WHO SERVED IN WORLD WAR II, AND IN THE MERCHANT MARINE AT THAT TIME, AND UP TO AND INCLUDING THE KOREAN CONFLICT.

Note: Those marked with a star were killed in action in World War II.

Aldred, Earl R.
Aldred, Paul K.
Andersen, James M.
Anderson, Edwin A.
Anderson, John M.
Anderson, Walter A.
Anderson, Wiltho M.
Ashline, Nelson F.
Baker, Milton O.
Ballard, Walter M.
Ballard, Walter M., Jr.
Barnhart, Leroy F.
Barnhart, Richard B.
Barry, David M.
Bartlett, Robert A.
Beach, Raleigh W.
Begley, Robert M.
Billings, Bernard
Birch, Warren F.
Bird, Frederick T., Jr.
Boatman, Dewey E.
Bohunicky, Philip W.
Bondelevitch, Stanley W.
Boyer, Charles W., Jr.
Bardley, James
Braman, Clarence E.
Braman, George W.
Briggs, Russell L.
*Britt, Robert F.
Brooks, Robert A.
Bulette, Henry F.
Bundy, Hazel O.
Bundy, Lloyd
Bursaw, Burton B.
Bursaw, Edward W.
Bursaw, Richard P.
Bursaw, William W.
Butler, Horace B.
Butler, George W.
Buxton, Harold A.
Byers, David B.
Byers, John S.
Callanan, Charles M.
Callanan, James B.
Campbell, John McL.
Carey, Lester O.
Caron, Leo W.
Chaplin, Harold F.
Charter, Franklin H.
Charter, George H.
Charter, John W.
Charter, Wesley D.
Chickering, Emerson K.
Chisolm, Walter F.
Claflin, Charles E.
Claflin, Leon M., Jr.
Clapp, Robert E.
Clapp, Victor
Clark, Robert E.
Clemence, George B.
Cole, Thomas W., Jr.
Collins, Francis
Conheeney, James P.
Condon, William E.
Connor, Thomas L., Jr.
Conquest, Frederick S.
Conquest, John F.
Conquest, Thomas R.
Costello, Edwin J.
Costello, John H.
Cullinane, Cornelius C., Jr.
Curley, Edmund M.

Curley, John J.
Curley, Michael G.
Curtis, Norman A.
Cushing, Preston L.
Davis, Henry A., Jr.
Davis, Milton E.
Davis, Ralph J.
Davis, Richard C.
Day, Dr. Joseph P., Jr.
Day, Joseph P. 3rd
Deane, Richard M.
Decker, James A.
DeFigueredo, Lincoln S.
Derby, Benjamin E.
Derby, Richard A.
Dexter, Charles R.
Dickson, George H.
Dickson, Henry S.
Diggs, Daniel E.
Dingee, James H.
Dingee, John A.
Dorchester, John
Dow, Robert G.
Downey, Frank E.
Downey, George P.
Doyle, Henry D.
Dragon, Augustave J.
Drury, William W.
Dugan, James L.
Duggan, John P.
*Duggan, Peter J.
Durand, Robert I.
Duren, Irving S., Jr.
Durkee, Albert W.
Durkin, William J., Jr.
Duston, Dr. Charles H.
Edney, James P.
Espie, James E., Jr.
Farley, Charles J., Jr.
Feely, John F.
Feely, William G.
Feltus, Carroll M.
Feltus, Donald O.
Feltus, Robert J.
Files, Donald L.
Flagg, Alden C., Jr.
Flagg, William H.
Fletcher, Robert J.
Flint, Carl W.
Fobes, James E.
Fobes, Ralph E.
Fogarty, Warren R.
Foote, Frederick M.
Foster, Albert E.
Fraser, Margaret E.
Fraser, Wilfred A.
Freeman, Carl A.
Freeman, Harold R.
Freeman, Samuel L.
Freeman, William H.
French, James H., Jr.
Frizzle, Norman A., Jr.
Frost, Robert E.
Gallagher, Thomas C.
Gallagher, Thomas C., Jr.
Gallant, Richard A.
Gates, Dr. Paul P.
Gilbert, Alfred G., Jr.
Gilbert, George B.
Gilbert, Norman R.
Godfrey, Carl R.
Goodearl, Robert F.
Goodwin, Kenneth R.
Goodwin, Paul E.
Gould, Glenn, Jr.
Gowen, Elmer F., Jr.
Granberg, Alfred O.
Gravlin, Gordon W.
Gray, Raymond E.
Greenough, Charles F.
Guneelman, Richard A.
Hampson, Kenneth A.
Hartwell, David W.
Hayes, Arthur J.
Hayes, Ralph B.
Haynes, Albert L.
Hayward, Russell D.
Herrick, Ralph W.

Herrick, Richard T.
Hickey, Carmin H.
Hickey, Sandford N.
Higgins, Edward J. Jr.
Holland, Neville R.
Holland, William D.
Hollowell, Calvin H.
Hollowell, Frederick E.
Hollowell, Harry M.
Horan, James M., Jr.
Horton, Barbara A.
Horton, Ruth A.
Horton, Wiliam R.
Houghton, Robert H.
House, Anita V.
Howard, Donald R.
Howard, John C.
Howe, Richard P.
Howe, Robert J.
Howell, Richard G.
Hurley, Arthur L.
Hurley, Edward N.
*Jenks, David L.
Jenney, Maurice P.
Jensen, Allen
Jensen, Albert
Johnson, Donald E.
Johnson, Patricia A.
Johnson, Stanwood
Johnston, Francis W.
Jules, Laurie E.
Kansanniva, Kalervo
Kelley, John A.
Kennedy, Thomas F. S., Jr.
Kienow, Kenneth K.
King, Hobart T.
Kleinfelder, Harry C., Jr.
Knight, Harold J.
Knippel, Ernst A.
Kreuger, Edgar
Lacourse, Louis J.
LaDuke, George C., Jr.
Laffin, Harold M.
Landry, Ausan A.
Lathrop, Betsey S.
Lawton, Robert A.
LeBoeuf, Conrad E.
Leveroni, Mary L.
Liebfried, George F.
Liebfried, Lawrence L.
Linscott, Roy H., Jr.
Lizotte, Eileen M.
Locke, Milton R.
Lockwood, Ralph H.
Loring, Donald L.
Lovejoy, Howard W.
MacDougall, Donald W.
MacDougall, Edward G.
MacDougall, Roderick D.
MacGregor, Malcom S.
MacPhee, Donald L.
Maglione, James
Maguire, David T.
Maguire, John W.
Mahaney, Mildred E.
Mahoney, Adele J.
Major, Robert R.
Manion, Charles E.
Manter, Charles D.
Marble, Betty L.
Marble, Ralph P. Jr.
Marini, Dominic A.
Marshall, William L.
Mason, Robert E.
Mauro, Ralph R.
Mauro, Robert L.
Mekkelsen, Helen B.
Mekkelsen, James R.
Mekkelsen, John O.
Merriam, Burton A.
Merriam, Herbert W., Jr.
Merriam, James A.
Miney, Otto H.
Mitchell, Donald F.
Mitchell, Thomas S.
Mitchell, William T.
Morison, Alexander, Jr.
Morison, Archibald

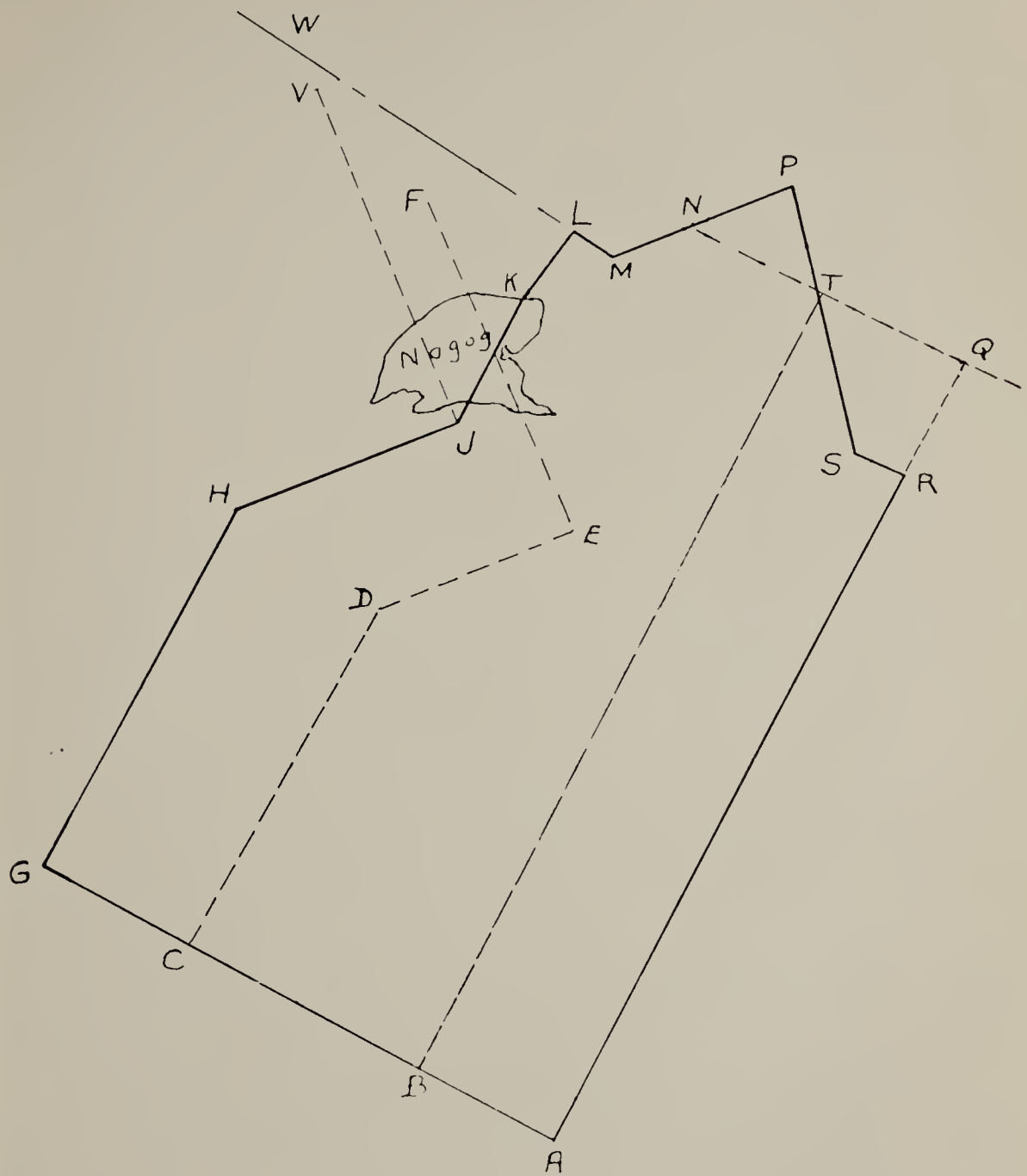
Morong, Dorothy J.
Morris, Robert J.
Morse, George A.
Morse, Harry B.
Murphy, Jerry E.
Murray, Robert L.
*McAllaster, Robert W.
McAvenia, James F., Jr.
McAvenia, Raymond
McCabe, Richard S.
McDonald, Robert J.
McGuigan, John W.
McGuire, Edward L.
McLaughlin, John E.
McNiff, Edmund J.
McPhee, Carroll E.
Neagle, George E.
Nelson, Allen H.
Newsham, Richard R.
Newsham, Robert E.
*Nichols, John M.
Nichols, Orla E., Jr.
Nichols, Robert S.
Nickerson, David A.
Nickerson, Harold E.
Nordberg, Harold F.
Nugent, Bernard A.
Oelschlegel, Fritz F.
Olsen, William P.
O'Niel, James E.
O'Toole, David L.
Parkhurst, Esther M.
Parsons, Donald A.
Paskiewicz, Anthony
Paskiewicz, Joseph
Pederson, George
Pederson, Ingvald
Pellett, Harold L., Jr.
Pendergast, Edward L., Jr.
Penney, George T.
Peppard, Murray B.
Perkins, LaForest W.
Peterson, Edgar H.
Peterson, Richard H.
Peterson, Robert A.
Peterson, Robert N.
Peterson, Stephen G.
Peterson, Warren R.
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APPENDIX XXIII

POPULATION OF ACTON BEGINNING WITH THE PROVINCIAL CENSUS OF 1765

1765 (Prov.)	611
1776 (Prov.)	769
1790 (U. S.)	853
1800 (U. S.)	901
1810 (U. S.)	885
1820 (U. S.)	1047
1830 (U. S.)	1128
1840 (U. S.)	1121
1850 (U. S.)	1605
1855 (State)	1678
1860 (U. S.)	1726
1865 (State)	1660
1870 (U. S.)	1593
1875 (State)	1708
1880 (U. S.)	1797
1885 (State)	1785
1890 (U. S.)	1897
1895 (State)	1978
1900 (U. S.)	2120
1905 (State)	2089
1910 (U. S.)	2136
1915 (State)	2151
1920 (U. S.)	2162
1925 (State)	2387
1930 (U. S.)	2482
1935 (State)	2635
1940(U. S.)	2701
1945 (State)	2869
1950(U. S.)	3510



Map to accompany appendix XXIV

APPENDIX XXIV

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONFLICTING DATA CONCERNING THE SOUTHERLY AND WESTERLY BOUNDARIES OF CONCORD VILLAGE

Within the last few months previous to the publication of this volume, and after a careful study of the photostatic material supplied by the Massachusetts archives, the author conceived of a possible explanation of the contradictory material bearing on the dilemma. In preparing this discussion he sought and obtained the very cordial assistance of Mr. Vincent D. McManus, former mayor of Williamsburg and surveyor of long and successful experience, eleven years of which was with the United States Geological Survey.

The heavy lined polygon AGHJKLMPSR outlines Acton of today. The dotted line NQ is the prolongation of the northeastern boundary of Concord as originally laid out. The point Q is the so-called Berry Corner and was the northwest corner of the square originally laid out to Concord in 1635. The point A was the starting point of the Concord survey and the line AQ is the distance locally designated as the Concord old bound.

An ordinary reading of the records leads to the conclusion that Concord was granted five thousand acres on May 29, 1655 and an additional five thousand acres on May 23, 1665, two thousand acres of which were reserved. Hence it would appear that the total area of Concord Village was eight thousand acres.

In reporting their survey Beers and Noyes assert that they started at the angle of the Concord bounds (point A on the map) and measured along an extension of the Concord line a distance of two miles two hundred and eighty rods. This would bring them to point C, which, they claim, was located on a bare hill.

Here they turned a right angle and went two and a half miles and fifty rods, thereby arriving at point D, which, they assert, was the corner of Nashoba Plantation.

They then ran along the line of the plantation, DE on the map, turned a right angle at E and again ran along the boundary of Nashoba, and presumably met at point F the line of Chelmsford (MLW on the map).

On the basis of this assumption Shattuck's claim that part of Nashoba lay in Acton is logical, but to take this position requires that one be prepared to reconcile the following contradictions.

1. The modern geological map of Acton accords the town an area just in excess of thirteen thousand acres and it is an established fact

that the boundaries on the northwesterly side (lines GHJKLMP) have been unaltered since the time of the incorporation.

2. In 1730 Stephen Hosmer surveyed Concord Village and obtained an area of twelve thousand nine hundred and sixty five acres. As will be established presently Littleton had already absorbed Nashoba and hence it is well nigh certain, in the light of the area of modern Acton, that Hosmer must have surveyed an area very closely approximating the polygon AGHJKLMNQ.

3. The corner E when laid off on a modern map falls one hundred and thirty rods northwesterly from the residence of Mr. John Whittier on Main St., in other words one mile and twenty rods from the nearest point on the town boundary (distance EJ on the map). This would seem to place the Nashoba corner well within the confines of Acton but it flatly contradicts item 2 above and likewise the following facts.

4. The citation concerning the perambulation of the bounds between Nashoba and the Powers land states specifically that the starting corner was at the westerly end of "nagog pond" and was carried toward Tadmuck (now Westford). This implies that the point E should fall at J. If J does not appear to be at the west end of Nagog it must be borne in mind that this was written in 1707 and that the present dam was built about 1850 thereby changing the shape of the water area appreciably.

5. Furthermore (Province Laws, Resolves, etc., 1725-26, Chap. 264) relative to a petition of certain persons seeking annexation to Littleton, there appears an important statement. Much of the material is not germain but the following bears on the problem:

". . . . having heard the Pleas and Allegations of the Petitioners Viewed their Situations and considered the objections of the Inhabitants of the West part of Chelmsford, are Humbly of the Opinion, That all that part of Concord known by the name of Power's Farm (alias Nashoba) together with all such Petitioners of Chelmsford West Precinct as do inhabit the Lands lying on the Westerly side of a line . . . . be annexed to the town of Littleton . . . . . "

The above states categorically that Nashoba was absorbed by Littleton in 1725 in toto. If so why is not the present boundary between Littleton and Acton along the line DE rather than along HJ?

6. Next we have the very positive assertion of Mr. H. J. Harwood of Littleton, a man known for his meticulous bent in things historical, that no part of Nashoba lay within the boundaries of Acton as now delineated.

Just in passing it may be noted that there is a contradiction between items 4 and 5 above. It does not bear on the point at issue but shows the difficulties that beset the researcher. The conflict lies in the fact that in 4 there is the statement that in 1707 a line of demarca-

tion existed between Nashoba and the Powers Farm, at least in the minds of the men walking the bounds whereas in 5 the parenthetical note "alias Nashoba" indicates that in 1725 the two were considered identical.

7. Seventh, and lastly, it must be explained how, if five thousand acres was somehow acquired without trace or record of the transaction, the highly improbable circumstance should transpire that the westerly boundaries of this new area (acquired sometime between 1665 and 1730 and having no connection presumably with the Beers and Noyes survey) should have westerly boundaries that match almost perfectly as to length and direction the lines laid down by Noyes and Beers in 1666. In other words we are to believe that it is sheer luck that the lines GHJV match the lines CDEF. This is to believe in a monstrous miracle of probability and has the added drawback that thereby Beers and Noyes contradict themselves and have the western boundaries passing across Nashoba rather than bounding it.

Now for the alternative approach to the dilemma. The author offers it not as a complete solution but as a plausable alternative. He cannot prove it by much documented data in addition to what has already been offered but the assumptions used are less formidable than to attempt to reconcile the seven statements posed above. He was led to study the problem in detail by the following considerations:

(a) When the first five thousand acres were laid off it seems probable and natural that the easiest method would be adopted, namely, to move the side AQ of the old Concord square parallel to itself a distance sufficient to provide the requisite area.

(b) The highly suggestive coincidence in (7) above.

(c) The fact that after making allowance for the difference in the magnetic and the true north in Massachusetts as of the dates involved, the directions given by Beers and Noyes agree surprisingly with the lines of the modern government maps.

(d) Beers and Noyes assert that at point C they turned a right angle on a bare hill.

A casual glance at the geological survey map makes it clear that point C does not lie on a hill but is located in Stow Swamp about midway between Willow Street and Stow Street. There is a respectable hill a quarter of a mile due south but in view of statement (c) above Beers and Noyes could not have landed on it and maintained the compass reading they give.

Let it be assumed for the sake of argument that instead of being at point C they were really at point G on Flagg Hill. If we lay off backward from G a distance equal to AC we arrive at B. If then we draw a line from B parallel to AQ we get a rectangle BTQA which is 34023 feet long and 5653 feet wide and containing 4315 acres. This

is quite acceptable in view of the likelihood that Beers and Noyes obtained the distance by laying the chain along the ground and hence would get a generous footage as compared with the geological survey.

In the Beers and Noyes report the language is somewhat obscure but nowhere does it state that the survey of 1666 included that of 1655. They do state that they began at the old Concord bound but since neither one lived in Concord they might have assumed that the five thousand acres granted in 1655 belonged to Concord and hence considered B the old bound rather than A.

However clear the language appears any researcher knows that what the record states and what happened are not necessarily the same. One surveyor of long experience upon reviewing the manuscript at the request of the author immediately made a suggestion that would appear heretical to the layman, namely, that somewhere an error of ninety chains was made, either in actuality or in recording. This would come very close to accounting for the mile and a tenth discrepancy. If we accept this or the alternative of starting at point B the seven conflicting statements listed above are reconciled.

The writer makes no claim that his thesis is a solution. It is merely a possible explanation. If the reader rejects it as far fetched he may entertain himself by finding a better. If he takes Beers and Noyes to be infallible and correctly quoted then he must accept the conclusion that all subsequent surveyors were hopelessly wrong and that Acton, by some necromancy now obscure, secured five thousand acres without let or hindrance, and without record thereof, in an era when all the neighboring towns were avid for additional territory.

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p. 221, line 26, for Rockwell read Rockwood.

p. 361, line 22, for Exeter read Andover.

p. 426, Appendix XVII should include the following names: J. Sherman Hoar, George Rouillard, George Sawyer, Warren Teele, Daniel Veasey.

In addition for Channey U. Fuller read Chauncey U. Fuller, for Judson A. Huggins read A. Judson Huggins, and for Emory A. Simonds read Emory A. Symonds.

p. 432, Appendix XX should include the following names: J. Sherman Hoar, Charles E. Sprague, Allen G. Smith, Matthew Smith, Matthew A. Smith, Nathan E. Tuttle, Henry W. Tibbetts, Joseph R. Vangesel, Allen P. Whitcomb, Augustus G. Whitcomb,, Nathan H. Whitcomb, William H. Whitcomb, Henry Willard, Alonzo M. Woodward.

p. 453, under the heading Town Hall, for register broker read register broken.

p. 455, for Jennis Bean read Jennie Bean.

p. 460, under the name Isaac W. Flagg the reference to page 375 should apply to Isaac T. Flagg.